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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A SELFISH PASSION.]

FATE OR FOLLY; OR, AN ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. SCRATCHELL'S VISITOR.

I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

CLARICE was rather sorry than otherwise when Sir Richard announced his intention of leaving the Manor House for Scarborough. From her childhood's years she had watched the first appearance of spring primroses and violets, and had gathered nosegays of the bright spotted cowslip, while the thousand odours of the south-west wind which had played amid her hair soothed her senses.

She had sat for hours reading her childish books under the pink-scented blossoms of the shady hawthorn, and she loved the Manor House. It grieved her to think they were leaving it, perhaps for ever.

Sir Richard coming suddenly into Clarice's morning-room found her in tears, her face buried amid a cluster of lovely roses. His own heart, too,

was sad, and it pleased him to find that Clarice was not a more cold worldling, but had a capacity for clinging to the old home that had sheltered her.

"Are you sorry to leave the Manor House, Clarice?" he asked, gently.

And a stifled sob answered him as Clarice touched the roses without replying.

"A shadow rests on my home," he went on, sitting by the window, and looking at the lights in the sky.

Clarice thought he alluded to Lilian, and was still silent. Perhaps he would not sell the Manor House outright. Clarice might like to return here one day in the future. Lord Ormond, an old friend of his, wished the Manor House let to him for a time furnished, and Sir Richard changed his original resolve of selling the place.

Zama was in high spirits. The packing had gone on satisfactorily. Sir Richard had looked over various beautiful estates in Surrey, and had promised her that they should never live here again, but for the present they were going to Scarborough, and Zama would be in her glory.

Mrs. Steele and several other servants Lord Ormond wished retained. Clarice would take her maid, Mary, and the French lady's-maid, Mademoiselle Natalee, would be in attendance on Lady Allington. The finest suite of rooms at the most expensive hotel in Scarborough had been secured at a ruinous price; several carriages and about six horses and dogs were en route to the fashionable watering-place of the North, and all was bustle, expectation and excitement.

"What are you two doing here in the dole-

fuls?" asked Zama, entering and catching sight of Clarice in tears.

"Packing up a valuable piece of Sèvres, my dear," answered Sir Richard, pointing to a hamper which his valet was arranging. "I couldn't part with that and my favourite picture of 'Margaret.'"

This was a gem in its way, a painter's ideal of fairest girlhood, which Sir Richard had bought the last season in Rome—Margaret asleep before she had met Faust and found her heart tortured with Love's sorceries.

It was indeed Lilian who had sat for 'Margaret,' only he would never know. Rupert Tresilian had changed that look of extreme youth in the girl's face, and how could the father tell that the rich luxuriance of those golden-brown tresses, the tender droop of the sculptured eyelids, the soft, creamy shades of the fair complexion, were those of his lost Lilian.

As the Allingtons, Clarice, their servants, carriages, horses and dogs were journeying to Scarborough, some very humble portions of the community, common delf instead of finest china, were doing the same. Mr. and Mrs. Scratchell with the latest arrival—twins—and various members of the elder branches of their family were seated in a third-class railway carriage, eating sandwiches and sipping lemonade and cheap beer bottled for the occasion.

The Scratchells took up the whole of the railway carriage; they had brought a nurse-girl with them to look after the twins, who were christened Peter and Paul, and Mrs. Scratchell, tired and worried with dust, flies, and babies, was fanning herself with a copy of the "Daily Telegraph,"

while the worthy John, hatless in a corner, snored "the happy hours away."

Little Paul and Peter displayed a good deal of leg and shoulder. The elder girl Polly was now about sixteen; Sarah, the second, a year younger; both had their hair combed straight to their waists. Two of the elder boys were away in the country, two of the younger girls had died of scarlet fever soon after Clarice had left, so Mr. and Mrs. Scratchell were still only blessed with six, for the twins arriving almost as if by accident, filled up this 'gap' made by the death of the two youngest children.

"Bless their little hearts, how happy they all look," cried the devoted mother, lifting down a bag from above their heads—the same bag that Clarice had seen filled with oranges when they trudged off to the pantomime. "Would any of you like an orange now to quench your thirst?"

"Oh, yes, ma," quickly answered several voices.

Paul and Peter simultaneously clutched the bag, and might be seen a few minutes after sucking furiously away at the fruit in question, till Paul got a pip in his throat and had to be laid on his stomach and patted and shaken to promote its resurrection.

July's sun streamed hotly in on them through the blindless windows, dust blew in their eyes and noses and caused severe choking and sneezing. Mrs. Scratchell abused the discomforts of third-class carriages, and the wicked meanness of wealthy bankers towards their clerks, till she grew hoarse and nearly insulted the harmless ticket-collector who slipped their tickets ere reaching Scarborough.

"Oh, look, ma, at the pretty horses and dogs," cried Polly, as they descended from the train, and glanced wonderingly around.

Mrs. Scratchell was in a frantic state of suspense about the luggage. Paul and Peter had set to kicking and roaring. Mr. Scratchell swore heartily, and the nurse found her misss's hand-box, with her chip bonnet in it, had mysteriously vanished.

The horses and dogs alluded to by Polly belonged to the Allingtons; she then saw Mary Bunce and Mdlle. Natalie, the French maid, advance towards some fashionably-dressed ladies and speak to them.

"Cousin Clarice, I declare!" cried Polly, bitterly hating her own Dolly Varden hat at that moment, as she contrasted it with the elegant and tasteful work of art which Clarice wore.

"The Allingtons have come by the same train," gasped Mrs. Scratchell, having found a porter and the boxes.

Mr. Scratchell was one of those amiable husbands who leave everything to their wives: he was now drinking a brandy and soda in the refreshment-room.

"Oh, ma'am, I can't hold little Paul and Peter," cried the nurse-girl, as those mysterious prodigies struggled wildly and then rolled on to the stones.

Mrs. Scratchell shook the end of her cheap yellow parasol at her offspring, and then picked them up by their pelisses as if they were no heavier than small feathered fry, and with one under each arm nobly sallied forth—a fine representative of the splendid mother so famed in history who cried, pointing to her children: "Behold my jewels."

There also alighted from the train a very fashionably-dressed young man, no other than the individual who had arrested the flight of Clarice's horse a few days ago. He was called Dudley Ivors, and seeing him Mrs. Scratchell put down the twins and again shook and waved the yellow parasol.

"I might get a cheap room with the Scratchells for a week or two," muttered Dudley, advancing briskly. "Money being decidedly scarce, I must swallow vulgarity and weak tea to gain an end—if that end is but a garret."

He smiled and stroked his beautifully-trimmed black moustache. Young ladies passing him thought he was in the army. Mrs. Scratchell rushed at him in her fine maternal way and shook her ringlets a few inches off his patrician

nose and ogled him as if she were eighteen and the twins a myth instead of a nuisance.

Dudley was an adventurer, a reckless, daring, handsome fellow, who came to Scarborough "seeking whom he might devour." Rich Yorkshire and Manchester girls, whose papas smoked clay pipes with the "old woman" in the back kitchen, and had begun life with less than a five pound note; junior members of the aristocracy; gentlemen in the hands of the children of Israel; gentlemen who understood the mysteries of faro and baccarat; ladies who changed their names as often as they changed their lodgings—all these people were, to a certain extent, prey to Dudley Ivors. Besides there was Clarice—beautiful, wealthy, fascinating Clarice—the adopted child of Sir Richard Allington; surely she was worth any trouble in the pursuit.

"Only let me land that fish," thought Dudley, looking at Clarice as she stepped into Sir Richard's brougham, "and, Dudley, my dear boy, you may enjoy the sweets of leisure."

Clarice had seen her gallant knight—in fact, his image had somewhat ruffled the tranquillity of her slumbers. A warm but faint blush spread itself over her cheek, and her heart moved a trifle quicker. Who could he be and what was his name? When looking out of the brougham window she saw her Aunt Scratchell with him; then hope revived—of course she would soon see him again.

"My dear madam," cried Dudley, squeezing Mrs. Scratchell's ill-gloved hands—she wore two odd gloves, a right and a left belonging to the same fraternity in point of colour, but not in fit—"delighted to see you. Where's my friend John? Hoped to have seen him at the Derby. I always make a capital book, you know. Could have put a 'monkey' into John's pocket. I got a telegram in the morning from my double, 'All dead 'uns but Devilhook!'"

This was indeed Greek to Mrs. Scratchell. Who was Devilhook, and who were the double and the monkey? Mrs. Scratchell wished to keep her John from even the mere appearance of evil, and she had heard moing strongly deprecated in the pulpit.

"Won't you come and stay a few days with and amuse John?" she asked, quite tenderly.

Dudley rather thought he would make the sacrifice—she was Clarice's aunt and might be a medium for an invitation.

"You are my good angel," he answered, lifting his eye-glass and surveying the twins, whose sticky fingers came too near his new trousers to be pleasant. He hated children, but he offered them his cane to remove their sinister intentions of counting the checks in the fashionable cloth.

"We've only got a leg of mutton and a batter pudding ordered for dinner at our lodgings," she said, advancing to meet her John; "but if you could make that do—"

"Do, I should think so. Batter pudding was my one weakness in youth, and I'll smoke a cigar with John and crack a bottle and discuss the future."

"Ah! my dear fellow, delighted to meet you," said John Scratchell, shaking hands warmly with Dudley. "I see the Allingtons have arrived by the same train. That girl Clarice is our niece."

"The most horribly ungrateful creature in the world," cried Mrs. Scratchell, rushing at Paul, who had hit Peter in the eye with Dudley's cane. "I nursed her through the measles, ill and weak as I was at the time. I never had my clothes off my back, if you'll believe me, for a week; and when I wrote and asked Clarice to let Polly and Sarah have her old dresses she never even answered my letter."

Mrs. Scratchell had seen Dudley settle his eye-glass and again glance at the brougham, which was nearly out of sight. He meant to marry Clarice, only the Scratchells must not know his little game at present. Dudley's affairs were disagreeably involved. Visions of policemen, handcuffs, counsel and judge at times rose before him; but his wonderful ingenuity and luck could probably stave off acquaintance with convict life and a prison.

But he was now hungry and remembered with pleasure the smoking leg of mutton and the batter pudding waiting for him at the lodgings. His coat might have been the creation of a Poole but his stomach was disagreeably empty.

"I shall never be really safe and quite out of the wood till I marry a rich girl," thought the adventurer, who had long lived upon women and levied black mail whenever practicable. "How can I get Clarice in my power? Will fate or folly ever make her at my mercy?" he mused, walking between the Scratchells towards their modest lodgings in Jubilee Terrace.

CHAPTER X.

DUDLEY IMPROVES THE OCCASION.

Thine eyes are stars of morning,
Thy lips are crimson flowers.
Good-night, beloved.

WHILE the aureo-lined Wisteria clings about the windows of the Manor House, and the fragrant fruits are slowly ripening on the orchard walls, and Lord Ormond and his family enjoy the sweet seclusion of the glorious old woods and park lands of Sir Richard's home, Scarborough is looking her gayest and brightest.

Scarborough, like a lovely woman conscious of her charms and power, is always a coquette. View her of a morning when the waves dance along the shingle in the sun, and equestrians gallop over the sands, and the most "chie" and recherché toilettes Worth can design are worn by visitors on the Spa.

And then view her again at an evening when hard flirting takes a more serious form than it dared in daylight, and costumes dazzle, and gold brocades, velvets and satins are ruthlessly swept along the promenade by their light-hearted owners, who seem to think there is no limit to husbands' pockets, and that to destroy fine estates is rather "good fun" than otherwise.

There is nothing modest or simple about Scarborough. She is all during and display, far more riotous and sumptuous in her extravagance than her elder sister Brighton, her great rival in refinement, but boasting none of those superior, natural beauties of scenery.

"Dress is everything here," Zama was saying to her maid, Mademoiselle Natalie, who was preparing her morning costume; "it's like being in Paris en fete. Everyone seems to live out of doors, and one gets to know heaps of people."

"I heard in the hotel last night that miladi was greatly admired," said the maid, giving her mistress that gross flattery which Zama had ever swallowed with avidity. "Miladi's Mecklenburg lace and pearls were considered splendid. One gentleman, I remark, has been constantly passing by the hotel this morning who you may remember was at the ball a few days ago—a dark, handsome man."

"Yes, I remember," said Zama, carelessly; "he was introduced to me by the Spanish Consul. It was hardly necessary. His manners proclaimed him a thorough gentleman, and he will be most useful in chaperoning me and Clarice, for poor Sir Richard seems to shut himself up as much as ever."

As Zama spoke, shaking back her heavy hair which Mademoiselle Natalie delighted in dressing in as many fashions as the most ingenious French intellect could devise, Clarice entered with eyes so suspiciously red that Zama concluded Miss Heathcote had been weeping. Clarice had one of those soft "watery" sort of features that the merest trifle will upset and dissolve into crystal drops. But perhaps she had some cause for tears to-day, in that she believed she was falling in love and sincerely desired to fall out again.

"I wish you would be cheerful here," Zama said, plaintively. "You English are so melancholy. What on earth is there to grieve about now, my dear? Go and put on your dark blue riding-habit and gallop all the nonsense out of you."

Two words trembled on Clarice's lips—

names that had been a living terror to her when a child—names associated with a garret and hunger—"Aunt Scratchell."

"I have seen some relatives to-day, Lady Allington," she said, leaning against the window-sill and looking out, "and they were most disagreeable and horrid to me."

Clarice's handkerchief went to her eyes at memory of her aunt's affectionate salutation, when pug-nosed Polly had even dared to sneer at her. Sarah had also turned her back on her, and they had called her in chorus wicked and ungrateful—with alas! Dudley Ivors looking on.

"I should not have minded their insults if it hadn't been for him," said poor Clarice, her lips quivering again; "but after all his kindness—seeing us home from the ball, and calling the next morning, and stopping Blue Peter when he ran away—"

"Fritzes, mere trifles, my dear child," said Zama, smoothing out her lace, "and only the man's duty. Remember your position, Clarice, in society—Sir Richard's adopted daughter and heiress. Lord St. Maur adores you, I'm quite sure, and Colonel Farquharson is positively dying for a glance. Don't go and fall in love with a nobody just because he's straight-nosed and dashing, a friend, too, of those miserable Scratchells."

Clarice blushed hotly, and received small comfort from Lady Allington's worldly balm. Was "he" not passing to and fro under the hotel windows longing to see her? Could any other man living put such languishing tenderness into grand grey eyes? Introduced too by the Spanish Consul; vouched for also by the Prince of Ivry, an intimate friend of Lady Golightly's—Clarice had seen him bowing over her hand as he hung over her bath chair for about five minutes; he was evidently very popular.

Could Dudley Ivors under these circumstances be a mere nobody? If so, then in what were the "somebodies" superior? Clarice was a very tender-hearted, susceptible girl. What chance had she of finding lovers at the Manor House? She was ready, like any other silly moth, to burn her wings at the first false lamp or brilliant candle that came in her way.

The adventurer, to be sure, had not lost time over his wooing of the best "spec" of the season at Scarborough, and his manner of going to work did positive credit to his education and training. Nourished on tender legs of mutton and juicy rounds of beef at Mrs. Scratchell's lodgings in Jubilee Terrace, and nothing expected of him beyond nursing the twins, one on each knee, for about half-an-hour on Sunday afternoons, he could hawk like a playful lizard in idleness in the sun, for Dudley was fond of taking even his pleasures easily, and hated the winter as much as a cobra could have done.

"I want to be out on the Spa this lovely morning," said Zama, her toilette finished, and taking up her gloves and parasol, "and hear the band play. Scarborough is divine; it quite reconciles me to England."

"Shall I ride?" asked Clarice, lingering.

"Of course, child; it will give you an appetite for luncheon."

Hope whispered that the "nobody" who was growing so dear to her heart might join her, quite unexpectedly, of course, and then she could tell him how cruel the Scratchells had been to her when a child.

Clarice never forgot injuries. Is this because in youth we have more passionate powers of loving and suffering? We are more intense. A man or woman will often sooner pardon the enemy who injured them in middle life than the vile tormentors of their youth. Dudley, in his own mind, was quite sure he could lure Clarice out for a ride. Had he not danced incessantly with her at the grand ball at the "Royal," and Dudley's dancing was superb; taking her also into supper in his hired, subdued way without in the least arousing anyone's suspicion of his being too attentive, feeding her with dainty ices, trifles and creams, and pulling crackers universally till his arms ached?

Was there not also one motto Clarice meant

to preserve till her dying day, and which now reposed inside the lid of her little keyless watch?—

Thine eyes are stars of morning,
Thy lips are crimson flowers.
Good-night, beloved.

That "good-night" was so sweetly sentimental; it affected her with a sense of the same gentle regret as the odour of preserved rose leaves which had said good-bye to summer. As Clarice left the room to prepare for her ride, she rang for the services of her faithful Mary, who appeared radiant and rosy, delighted with the freedom and enjoyment of hotel life at Scarborough.

Mary suspected all was not quite right with her young lady, and sighed sympathetically as she saw the traces of tears on her cheek. Clarice was unusually silent. She was full of youth's fairest illusions; she never wondered if the eyes that had looked so lovingly into hers that night of the ball could smile and deceive; she would have staked her life on this man's fidelity with all the fierce, beautiful trust of youth.

When her horse and groom came round to the door of the hotel, Clarice gathered her habit over her arm and descended quickly, scarcely heeding Mary's suggestion that it looked likely to rain by-and-bye.

Her groom swung her lightly into the saddle, and followed on a showy chestnut. Sir Richard nodded her a kind farewell from his room. Many young girls envied Clarice as she rode along on her splendid thorough-bred, while several specimens of elderly ladies tossed their heads and thought how unfair were Fate's workings, and that she'd be better on her feet. Among these were two shabbily dressed women—Mrs. Scratchell and her intimate friend and crony, Mrs. Pricilla Ivors.

Dudley's mother was a very dilapidated being; the crown of her bonnet at times seemed singularly anxious to part company from the remaining portion. She could neither clothe nor feed her dainty offspring. Dudley was intensely mortified and annoyed on meeting "the maternal" one morning down a shady side street, and sedulously endeavoured to avoid her by putting up a new umbrella, but Mrs. Ivors, who always clung to the hope of his marrying well and keeping his carriage, was not to be thus shaken off, and pounced on Dudley with the promptitude of an enfeebled terrier after a sportive and ubiquitous rat.

"There's a nice specimen of a grateful heart," cried Mrs. Scratchell, pointing to Clarice as she cantered on ahead. "A perky little hussey. I nursed her through the measles, and fed and clothed her, and now she won't have a word to say to me, nor John, nor her cousins."

"We must never expect gratitude in this world," Mrs. Ivors answered, asthmatically; "but now she's so rich, wouldn't she about be worth speaking to, eh? Why not bury the hatchet?"

Mrs. Scratchell smiled.

"I rather fancy your son's a bit smitten in that quarter. I see him sitting in such deep thought sometimes after his dinner."

"Yes, she'd just suit my boy. No fear about the money there; but I don't suppose Sir Richard would care for the match."

"Perhaps he wouldn't be consulted," answered Mrs. Scratchell, winking and nodding her head. "They might keep it all snug and to themselves till after his death."

"But I've heard the heir presumptive is Sir Herbert Tresilian of Crawley Castle. Suppose Sir Richard changes his mind and leaves it all to him in his will, or the daughter Lilian is found?"

"He will always provide handsomely for Clarice," said Mrs. Scratchell, decisively. "Sir Richard's not the man to break his word. She'll be a splendid match for Dudley."

Mrs. Ivors thought so too, and relapsed into pathetic silence. Would Dudley play his cards well, or would the fascinating, yellow-haired ballet girl Mrs. Ivors had once seen on his arm in St. James's Park prove too much for his imagination and discretion?

"I'm afraid my boy's a bit of 'ne'er-do-

weal," said his fond mother, sighing and shaking the refractory bonnet crown; "he's been so often nearly landed as you may say in clover, and then come down to thistles."

But Dudley was quite wide awake to-day. He had hired a harmless hack from the livery stables, and kept him unnaturally lively and spirited with the spur, and as soon as Clarice was a safe distance from the hotel, did he gallop to her side with the air of a man charging with cavalry, or one whose steed is painfully mettlesome and requires judicious care in its control.

Yes, he could tell she was pleased to see him. He understood, none better, the value and the meaning of a woman's blush, and here was no rouge to make him doubtful, here no guile or affection whatever. He thought he would "pile on the agony" a little stronger this morning and sound her heart. Bending over the shining neck of Clarice's horse he adjusted the martingale bridle, and then held out his hand. Here went trembling into his with the faint, imperceptible flutter of a little bird's wing.

"You are in no danger to-day, are you?" he said, smiling into her dark eyes; "but I really must warn you about the look of those suspicious clouds above us. I believe we are in for a smart shower."

As Dudley spoke a few heavy drops of rain fell. Clarice was in that peculiar feminine state of mind which makes one half-abashed, half daring. No danger about her path to-day? When Fate was blinding her vision and bidding her stumble to her doom!

"It is, of course, delightful to thus meet you unexpectedly, Miss Heathcote," said Dudley, lifting his bright, defiant eyes, "because, you see, I fear these chance meetings must soon be so rare. I have orders from the Spanish Consul to leave England."

Now this was a deliberate falsehood. The Spanish Consul had lost money to Dudley at cards and had paid up like a gentleman. Dudley had also got him out of some trouble in another way, and they were decidedly friendly; but he merely said this to test Clarice—to find if she were sorry to think he would fade from her life.

"Must you go?" she asked, impulsively.

And nature here again proved too strong for her, for in spite of all her efforts, those over-ready tears again gleamed beneath her black lashes.

"Must I? Well, it is perhaps for you to decide that question," cried Dudley, palpitating and encouraged by her emotion and the falter in her voice. "My dearest, will you listen to me—to me who love you madly, hopelessly?"

The blood had rushed to Clarice's brow in a strong tide, and seemed to leave her heart and make her sick and faint. She was no ball-room belle, unrivalled in the unfurling of a fan, in the abandon of a gesture. This sudden passion of Dudley's, those beseeching eyes and tremulous tones, almost unnerved her too much for a reply. He went on bravely, fully conscious of the effect he was creating.

"It is terrible to love as I do," he said, his voice falling into melodious inflexions. "Your beauty haunts me by night and day. I always see you as you looked to me that night of the ball—the lights streaming on your dark, diamond-decked hair, and the folds of your white satin. I seem to feel the impress of your little hand on my arm. You do not know, Clarice, the depth of my love."

For once Dudley, spite of his lust for gold and greed, was sincere in his declaration. Clarice was very beautiful; her sweetness and gentleness touched him, and her weakness of character entranced him, because he liked to play the master and find a slave at his feet—bathed in smiles or tears as he pleased—in the woman he loved.

She was a great heiress, but she was also a timid girl whom he had sworn to win, in the teeth, too, of great disaster, an impending ruin. He knew there was a fierce, ay, a desperate struggle before him.

"One word, my darling. Give me either my death blow or undying bliss. Do you ever think of me?"

Think of him! Clarice owned she adored him. She was also a little in awe of him, for Dudley knew that she must be conquered ere won.

"I do care for you," said Clarice, trembling as she spoke. "I shall care for you, I think, as long as I live."

"And you will be my wife?" he cried, with a lover's thrill.

Dudley felt the grand crisis was over as Clarice bowed her head. He had now only to follow up this splendid victory. The garrison had indeed surrendered without a struggle. But the rain—the cruel, merciless, stinging drops came down on them now like blows and they were miles from home—rather spoilt the comfortable romance of the situation.

Dudley expressed his satisfaction at her answer as well as a man can who is nearly drenched to the skin—who also sees his latest dark blue coat by Poole completely spoilt, and wonders how he can get credit for another.

"Let's try that village hostelry yonder," he cried, pointing with his whip to a modest wayside inn before them. "Let Summers take our horses round to the stables and we seek shelter there till the worst of the storm is over."

That "we" entranced Clarice. Dear, little innocent monosyllable. When she and Dudley were married it would be always "we." Clarice obeyed him already.

(To be Continued.)

OFF THE SCENT.

THE Russian police have suffered much annoyance at the hands of the Nihilists, who resort to all sorts of expedients to lead them astray. They denounce one another, and the police are kept for months running on a fool's errand. It is known that numerous arrests have been made in consequence of last year's events, and of those arrested almost two-thirds were seized on the ground of anonymous denunciations, and were afterwards set free; but many had of course to pass a long time in prison before their liberty was restored to them. Then the Nihilists carried on a plot. They used to write to the Third Section to the effect that "in the house of such a number, in such a street, on such a floor, etc., there was a secret press, and it was being worked from twelve o'clock at night till four o'clock in the morning."

The following night the police would appear, only to find no press or anything of the kind, but sleeping inmates, who showed themselves perfectly willing to assist the police in their search. Again and again was this comedy gone through. The police were naturally annoyed about these anonymous letters, and began to disregard them; and, in fact, such communications ceased to reach them. The secret printing-offices were then set up in the very quarters which had thus been visited to no purpose. Another proof that the Argus-eyed police are mere men.

TIRED WOMEN.

ALL through the country one meets with tired, careworn women who seem to have entirely lost health, hope and ambition. They are forced into the position of mere drudges, and, too often, meet with no sympathy from their husbands, who sneer at the idea of woman's work being so burdensome when they remember their own laborious tasks. But sneering does not lessen the labour of the wives to whom kitchen, pantry, milk-room, dining-room, suggest drudgery. The man has a constant change of scene with all the excitement incident thereto. He goes from breakfast to the plough, the harrow, and the constantly varying duties

of the farm. His meals are prepared for him, and after supper he can enjoy his pipe in peace, his work over for the day.

But with his wife it is different. Early in the morning she rises to kindle the fire, dress the children, cook breakfast, wash the dishes, send the children to school, get the dinner, wash the dishes—and if there is a moment to spare between dinner and supper, to spend it in sewing—get supper, wash the dishes, put the children to bed—and if a moment more offers, to sew, besides taking care of the morning and evening milk, churning and working butter, and a hundred things that must be done every day, in exactly the same way and order. She has no time for pleasure. She does not attend any lodge or society meeting; she visits a neighbour but very seldom, "she's so busy;" she does not walk out after tea to meet a friend, to drive away care by social converse; her duties vex her till bedtime, when, anxious and careworn, it's long ere she can sleep, or if she can, the teething baby or the sick child demands her care; and she may spend half the night in quieting it to be roused from a troubled sleep all too soon, to re-commence the weary routine. Is it any wonder that farmers' wives so often leave the scene of their thankless toil for the insane asylum?

SLEEPING.

Not in this cradle sleeping
Is my darling baby fair—
Not on the carpet creeping—
But, in his table chair,
He sleeps such rosy slumber
As childhood only knows,
Whose hearts no cares encumber
To mar their sweet repose.

He sits with dimpled fingers
Pressed to his roseate cheek—
And on his face still lingers
A smile, and sunbeams streak
His pretty locks so golden,
Kissed by the summer breeze,
No sweeter sights beholden
By mothers are, than these.

His knife and fork have fallen,
What cares he for them now?
Such minor things do pall on
Sweet baby's senses now.
He's revelling in the fancies
Of childhood's sweet domain,
Where innocence enhances
His sweet, cherubic reign.

Oh, tell me not of pleasures
In palace hall so gay,
But give me cottage treasures
Like this I own to-day.
A little cherub dreaming—
A floweret sweet and rare—
On whom the sunlight beaming
Helps charm away my care.

Sleep on, for angels ever
Are sweetly watching thee,
And nought but sin can sever
Them in futurity.
Oh, mayst thou never slumber
When covert danger lies,
May virtue's force outnumber
Temptation till it flies.

E.

A JUST SENTENCE.

MOST of our readers remember the sad story of a woman burnt in Russia by a number of peasants who accused her of witchcraft. The ruffians were acquitted on the ground that they had acted conscientiously and in accordance with the Scriptural ordinance: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!" The tribunal of Ustjush, in Russia, has recently, however,

taken a somewhat more enlightened view of a witchcraft case brought before it. One Ivan Alexieff and six women of his village prosecuted a peasant's wife named Charlamoff for having, as they alleged upon oath, injured their health by the practice of sorcery. To their surprise and discomfiture the court acquitted Charlamoff and denounced the prosecutors severely, sentencing the women to four months' imprisonment apiece, and Alexieff to fifty blows with a rod. The superstitious dolts were justly punished.

SWALLOW SUPERSTITION.

THE swallow has almost always been honoured as the harbinger of spring, and Athenæus relates that the Rhodians had a solemn song to welcome it in. Anacreon has a well-known ode. Dr. Foster mentions that the swallow's return was kept as a holiday for the children in Greece. "Swallows coming out of time" has given rise to the well-quoted expression "One swallow does not make a summer," which seems to have originated with Aristotle. In Perigord the swallow is considered as the "Messenger of Life." Shakespeare, in "A Winter's Tale," alludes to the time of the swallow's appearance in the following passage—

—daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares and take
The winds of March with beauty.

And again, its departure in "Timon of Athens"—

The swallow follows not summer more willingly
than we your lordship.

Tennyson also notes the bird's approach and migration in "The May Queen"—

And the swallow 'll come back again with summer
o'er the wave.

Respecting the problem of the swallow's migration, Cruden says it is believed to breed twice a year, once in each of the countries it inhabits annually. "When the swallows homeward fly," it still remains a mystery how they disappear during the cold season, which has caused many speculations and beliefs from accidental occurrences. They have been found in a dormant state in caves, clinging to the roof, and sometimes, even in the water, and under the ice, but only in isolated instances, and experiments have always failed to satisfactorily prove their capability of remaining in such a state. Spalanzani believed that they retired under the water. That they sleep under the ice during the winter is an opinion held in Sweden.

ANOTHER horror has occurred at Derby. On getting ready the lost luggage for the annual Midland Railway sale a box was found containing the remains of a child, interred two years, since the box had been that time in the company's possession.

SHERBET is a favourite beverage in the East, universally used among wealthy Mohammedans, to whom the use of wine is forbidden by the Koran. It consists of water, the juice of lemon, orange, or other fruits, with sugar flavoured further with honey, spices, and even perfumes. Its pleasant acidity blended with sweetness renders it well calculated to assuage thirst in a warm climate. The poorer classes, who cannot afford to have it so rich, drink water prepared with a little sugar and fruit juice. In India this is carried about in goats' skins for sale.

THE Government have a scheme in hand for transferring the National Gallery from London to the country, the gas having already injured the pictures. It is said the Government intend to apply to the Governor of Dulwich College for a site on their magnificent property, with the view of adding the Dulwich picture gallery as a separate wing to the proposed grand building on the manor of Dulwich.



[THE NEW LOVE.]

HER HUSBAND'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XII.

"ANYTHING WITH YOU."

True love's the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart and mind to mind
In body and in soul can bind.

SCOTT.

Six weeks later. Summer was rapidly waning, already almost a thing of the past, for the trees had begun to show changes in their foliage, and only the rich, late flowers still lingered in the garden of Aston rectory. The garden had been very much deserted of late; neither the rector nor his wife had cared to be much in it. The children played there sometimes, but even on their innocent mirth had fallen the shadow of a coming trouble.

Mrs. Granville went about with a sad, anxious face, and all the household went on their daily round of petty duties with hushed voice and muffled tread, and on all lips the question "How is she?" hovered when anyone was seen coming from Rosamond's room. For all these anxious weeks Rosamond had never left her chamber. That night's exposure to the storm had had dire consequences.

The next morning she was in a raging fever. For a whole month she had hovered between life and death, and now she had struggled back, as it were, from the gates of the grave, and was so far convalescent that at the end of the six weary weeks the doctor had allowed her to come

downstairs for the first time, so there was a bright fire burning in the drawing-room, and they brought Rosamond downstairs and laid her tenderly on the sofa.

She wore a loose invalid dress of delicate mauve. Her face was very pale and thin, every blue vein showing through the clear skin. Her hair had been all cut off in the fever, and now it curled in loose, short rings on her shapely head. Wonderfully fragile she looked, and yet very sweet and loveable, and strangely youthful for her twenty summers. If in looking at her one guessed her hold on life to be a feeble one, at the same time her smile so charmed the heart that one longed to do something to help to make that hold a stronger one.

It was all her life through characteristic of Rosamond that she won love first and admiration afterwards. Strikingly beautiful though she was, it was her own sweetness that first charmed a stranger. Only afterwards did they perceive the rare loveliness of her face. Mrs. Granville was delighted at her charge's progress. She sat by Rosamond with a bright smile on her face, and yet tears hovering near her eyes. She had always loved Miss Keith, but it was only during her long illness that she had quite realised how much.

"The fourth of September," said Rosamond, her eyes wandering to an ornamental calendar on the wall. "Have I really been ill so long as that?"

"You have been upstairs six whole weeks, Rosamond, but you will soon grow strong again now."

"I don't feel much like it," wearily. Then, in another tone, "How very, very good you have been to me, Mrs. Granville. If I had been your own sister you could not have been kinder."

"My dear, with a falter in her voice, "we are only too pleased to see you better. There have been many days lately when I thought we should lose you."

"Perhaps it would have been better." Then, as she caught the pained expression of her

friend's face, "Forgive me, dear. I am very wicked, only I feel so tired, and somehow or other no one seems to want me here."

"I think a great many people want you, Rosamond. I am sure we do."

"Would you have really been sorry if I had died?"

"How can you ask me, Rosamond? I liked you the first time I ever saw you, and lately, too, you have seemed just like one of ourselves."

"It was very foolish of me to go to the woods that night; but I felt so out of sorts—I was so miserable—I would not stay indoors."

"We have sent frequent accounts to Bedford Square, dear. Your guardian has been down two or three times. His son came once when we thought that—"

"When you thought I should not live? Poor Harold! Oh, Mrs. Granville, I wish he did not love me so."

"I never saw such devotion as his. He seemed to hang upon the doctor's words."

Rosamond sighed.

"When you hear of a great, true love it's generally given to someone who can't return it. I often wish there was no such thing as love in the world."

"Perhaps some day you may return Harold's. He is a noble-hearted young man."

"Yes, but I don't believe in the love that comes in time. I never did."

Mrs. Granville smiled.

"Don't vex your head about love, Rosamond. All you have to do is to get well and strong," she said.

"I owe my life to you, Mrs. Granville. I shall never forget that. But for you and Lord Fairleigh I must have died."

"You will not find us hard creditors, dear. The earl insisted on going to look for you. I never saw anyone more eager."

"I should like to write and thank him. Would he think it very odd?"

"It would be more natural to see him. Don't you think so, Rosamond?"

"Is he here? Has he really stayed all these weeks that I have been ill?"

"He could not bear to leave us while you were in such danger. Lately he has been away for a few days, but he came back this afternoon."

"He has been very, very good, Mrs. Granville."

"He is a true friend, Rosamond. I know you never liked him as we do, but perhaps you may get to understand him better, and then I am sure you will be more cordial to him."

Rosamond had a dim idea that she understood and liked him already a little too well.

"I don't deserve that he should ever speak to me again. I treated him very rudely; I openly slighted him. I told him to his face one day he did not deserve your friendship; and then he risked his life to save mine."

"He would go and look for you, dear. It was his own thought. I shall never forget his answer when we told him of the danger. He turned to me with a smile which was sadder than tears. 'I have no wife or little girls to be careful for,' he said. 'My life belongs only to myself, and there is no one to miss me.' After he had gone his words haunted me."

"I don't think he is happy," with a dreamy, far-off look in her eyes.

"How can he be, dear, when he has lost his wife? Of course his heart is buried in her grave."

Rosamond answered nothing. The tears trembled in her eyes. She was still very weak. Mrs. Granville thought she was tired, and begged her to get a nap.

"Nothing else will do you so much good. I will go up to the children, and come back to you presently."

"I should like to see Lord Fairleigh, just to thank him."

"He shall come in presently. I am sure you could not bear any excitement now. You are my prisoner, Rosamond, and I mean to be a strict gaoler. You must go to sleep now, and Lord Fairleigh shall come later on."

At first Rosamond thought sleep was impossible. She longed, yet dreaded, to see the earl. Her one anxiety was to get this first meeting over; she was so afraid of saying too much or too little. But after she had been alone a little while the quietness and her own weakness overcame her nervous restlessness; she forgot her troubles, past and present, in a quiet, refreshing sleep.

When our heroine awoke the short autumn day was closing in; but for the firelight she could hardly have described the objects in the room. The flames flickered capriciously, one minute lighting up everything in a ruddy glow, the next leaving them in a subdued gloom. Rosamond saw faintly that someone was sitting by the sofa—someone had drawn a chair quite close and was sitting watching her. Looking up, she met the gaze of Lord Fairleigh's dark eyes; she held out her thin, worn hand.

"They have told me all you did for me. I can never thank you as I ought, but, indeed, I know how kind you have been, and I am not ungrateful."

He took her hand and held it in his own. How very small and thin it looked in contrast to his firm, muscular one! He looked anxiously at her, and thought how fragilely delicate and weak it seemed. He kept the hand in his; his eyes never wandered from her face, but he spoke no word. Rosamond wondered at his silence; she noticed his keen scrutiny, and thought she understood it.

"You are thinking what a fright they have made me," touching the short rings of curly hair. "But it is not my fault; I knew nothing about it. The doctor would have all my hair cut off in the fever, Mrs. Granville says."

"I was not thinking that at all, remembering gently that one of her long tresses was in his own keeping. 'I was very grieved to see how very ill you look.'"

"Do I?" in a little surprise. "Why, Mrs. Granville thinks I am ever so much better. She said now I should soon be strong again?"

"Did she?"

This was his only answer, and the girl took alarm.

"Do you mean it is not true? Do you think I never shall be strong? Am I going to die, after all, and have they sent you to break it to me?"

"No, no, indeed," in answer to the pitiful entreaty of her eyes. "I am sure you are not going to die. We all hope you will be well, only, you know, I have not seen you since that night in the wood, and I could not help thinking how you were changed."

A short silence followed. For some reason both those two felt a strange embarrassment at alluding to the meeting in the wood. Rosamond had tried and failed. Lord Fairleigh spoke with a certain constraint. At last, with a faint colour in her cheeks, Rosamond resumed, as though he had not spoken:

"You were very good to me then."

"Was I?" wondering if she would say so if she knew of all that his goodness had consisted of.

"I used to be very rude to you before I was ill. I think I did my best to make you dislike Aston and go away. Somehow from the first day you came here I wanted you to go; when I thought I was dying I meant to ask Mrs. Granville to tell you I was sorry, but I can tell you myself now. Lord Fairleigh, will you forgive me?"

He does not answer—he cannot, such a fierce battle is raging in his heart: love is warring against prudence, awe, and something stronger than prudence. He drops the little hand, its very touch seems to pain him; he gets up from his seat and paces the room with rapid strides.

He is not angry, he is not vexed, but a mighty tumult is going on in his soul. He is undecided; he knows what he longs to do, but he knows also what he fears—no agony is more intense than that which he goes through, and it is for her sake as well as his own.

But there is no one to tell this to Rosamond—there is no one to explain his silence. She only knows that he has dropped her hand, he has left her side, he has not answered her petition. There is no pride now in her heart, and in her weak, quivering voice she repeats, sadly:

"Won't you forgive me?"

"Rosamond," he has stopped his agitated walk and stands by the sofa looking at her with his dark eyes. She does not start at the sound of her own name from his lips—perhaps she is too weak and ill for such a thing to surprise her; perhaps she has been too near the grave's portals for anything of earth to startle her yet, or perhaps there is a secret in her own heart which makes what is coming less strange. She turns her large eyes on him and he goes on: "Rosamond, I have nothing to forgive you, but I have much to forgive myself."

"To forgive yourself?"

"Have you never guessed my secret? I used to think you knew it and were cold to me, to show me it was all in vain. From the first moment of my coming here I have loved you—I love you as I never loved before, as I believe a man loves but once in life. My heart is yearning for you, my future looks desolate because it may not be shared with you."

A deep tremble came in his voice, he could hardly finish. He sat down then where he had been before, but he did not take her hand; he averted his eyes from her face, he did nothing to influence her reply, he never attempted to urge his suit. Although he had made an earnest profession of love he never asked if it were returned.

"You love me?"

"I love you so well that it is pain for me to be with you and yet I cannot tear myself away. I love you so well that I would give up all I have in the world just to gain your love."

It is a strange kind of wooing—both are young and free, he is rich and she is poor, and yet he speaks as if his love were hopeless. He speaks of sacrifices he would make for her with the conviction of one who knows that all sacrifices would alike be unavailing. How could she tell him he need not ask in vain while he persisted

in not asking at all? At last, in a sad, weary voice from which all hope was gone, he continued.

"I ought to be glad that you do not love me, I ought to be thankful that there is only one to suffer, that there is only one heart to ache, and yet I cannot be, Rosamond, I am selfish—I cannot be glad that you do not care for me."

Gently, gently as the touch of a snowflake, her fingers glide into his, he sees a look in her eyes he has never seen there before. He says nothing; she, too, speaks no word, but for all their silence both know that never more can they two be as strangers.

Whatever harm may come of Lord Fairleigh's love it must do its worst; if he was not strong enough to conquer his passion when he believed his suit hopeless, how can he do so now when he reads his happiness on Rosamond's face.

Time passes, moments glide on, and for a brief space these two are happy. The earl rouses himself—he will make one effort yet against his own heart; in justice to her he will warn her of a cloud that threatens her sunshine.

"Rosamond, I have been very wrong, my darling. I am not worthy of you. I ought to leave you, for I may bring you heavy trouble, and yet to think of leaving you is like trying to shut myself out of Heaven."

"If you love me why should you leave me?"

And excitement has given her strength, for her voice is firm and calm now.

"Rosamond, darling, I love you with my whole heart, nothing can alter that. Whatever comes, my darling, never doubt my love."

"No other trouble would hurt me whilst I still had that."

"You are such a child," tenderly, "such an utter child; you don't see the worldly-wise side of the affair. You would be my wife, dear," he went on with an effort at calm. "I could make you Countess of Fairleigh, but I cannot give you riches."

"Is that all?" smiling. "I don't want riches."

In all this world nothing is so difficult either to give or to take as a half confidence. The earl wished heartily to tell his darling a little of the cloud that overshadowed him, but he shrank from telling it all. Far, far better have left her in complete ignorance, or else have told her everything.

Rosamond dimly understood that though he loved her some trouble might spring from the love, but as to its nature she gathered no idea—the more Lord Fairleigh told her the more he puzzled her.

"While I live, dear, I can give you riches and honours, only, and that is not all, there is a dreadful barrier between us."

"It is not a sin?"

"My dear one, no; a hundred times no; only the name of Vane has been honoured justly for long years; in the future a slur may come on that name, by no act of mine, Rosamond. Only I shall be powerless to prevent it. Have I a right to ask you to share possible dishonour?"

There is a silence between them for a few moments, no shadow of his true meaning comes to Rosamond. She thinks he may be in debt, but she does not trouble herself much as to the nature of the dishonour; she believes no disgrace can touch him, and her choice is soon made, her eyes turn to him with unbounded trust in their clear depths.

"I could bear anything that came to me through you, sorrow or disgrace, if only it did not come through act or deed of yours."

And he?

Surely he has done all that man could do to warn her. Surely he has done all in his power to be unselfish. After those last words of hers he is to be expected to put happiness away from him—to bring bitter suffering to himself and her?

He is no philosopher, no stoic; he honestly strives to do his duty, but he never attempts to climb to fabulous acts of renunciation. He raises Rosamond from her resting-place and clasps her in his arms, he presses hot kisses on

her lips, and tells her she is his own for ever.

"Hugh," she says at last, when he has set her down and her head is once more on the cushions, he sitting very close and her hand clasped in his, "Hugh, I want to tell you something."

"I am listening, dear."

"Two years ago—a little more—I was engaged to be married. I did not love him as—I can love now, I was only a child and I gave him a child's affection."

A shade comes across Lord Fairleigh's face, he does not relax his hold on her hand if anything the pressure grows tighter.

"I fear I am jealous, Rosamond. I grudge even a dead man a place in your heart. I cannot help it."

"He is not dead," bravely.

"You gave him up?"

"I lost my fortune, she whispered; "Hugh, he destroyed my trust in him, and my love went with my trust. I could not have married him afterwards had my life depended on it."

"And you will be all mine without one regret of the past?"

"If you will have me—yes."

"And you can brave even the chance of poverty and disgrace?"

"I can bear anything with you."

"Rosamond, do you remember the first long talk we ever had together one summer evening in the twilight?"

"I think I remember everything you have ever said to me."

"It was one evening, the first time you ever sang to me. You sang 'When sparrows build.' Do you remember?"

"Yes," hoping he had not identified her confession with their brief remarks upon Sir Reginald Dane of Allerton.

"I told you then, Rosamond, that I had a hidden sorrow."

"Yes," with a faint, vague sense of ill.

"It will be our only secret, dear, this trouble, which may bring sorrow to us both. We may never feel it. All may go well, and whatever comes we will bear up together."

"And I may not share the fear with you."

"I will share all your fears and you shall share all my hopes. I like that division best, dear."

She is playing with the flower in his button-hole. Her eyes are cast down, so that they do not meet his face; she has something she wishes to say. She longs to ask, and yet the words will not come. He imprisons the hand that is busy with his buttonhole, and looks down searchingly into the sweet averted face as he asks:

"Am I so very terrible to you, Rosamond. Why are you positively trembling?"

"You are not at all terrible to me, Hugh."

"Trust me all in all, then, dear. Ask me what you will."

"Hugh, would you please tell me something about—about your wife?"

She can feel the hand that holds hers tremble. He must have loved the dead woman very much, Rosamond thinks sadly. She cannot see the grave, stern look on his face as he asks her:

"What have you heard? Only tell me that, Rosamond."

"Only that she was very beautiful, and that it was a runaway match. Mr. Granville said a great many people did not know you had been married at all."

"I think only half-a-dozen people did know it at the time. Later on, when," a pause, "she was dead, and I became Lord Fairleigh, the peerage, which always takes up the history of an earl, published the fact, otherwise, Rosamond, it was a perfect secret. When I went down to my country home for the first time as its master, no one around me knew that I was a widower."

"And she was very beautiful?" wistfully.

"She was very beautiful, Rosamond. I met her abroad and married her. It was not a runaway match though, for her guardian and her sister were present as well as my cousin."

"Was she dark or fair?"

"Dark. She had black eyes and purple hair."

Rosamond shivered.

"My darling, they have told you one thing wrong. I did not love her; I never even pretended to love her. I had been thrown a great deal into her company, and I fancied myself in love with her sister. I know now it was an idle fancy. She refused me, and in a moment of pique I proposed to the other and was accepted."

"Darling, rest assured of one thing: you have no need to be jealous; you are my first real love and you will be my last. After my rash proposal I would have given worlds to draw back, but it was too late. Rosamond, how can I tell you all I suffered. She came of a fine old Italian family, but she was utterly beneath me in culture and education. She had a fierce, violent temper. At twenty-four I was tied to a woman with whom I had not a thought in common, and whom I could not have introduced to my English friends."

"I am so glad, Hugh, that you won't be regretting the past. I know it is very wrong of me, but I cannot help it."

"I do not think it wrong. No, darling, you have no rival in my heart. I have suffered the trial of a loveless marriage. My past is embittered with painful memories; but my future is all yours; my life's love is for you."

"Did she love you too?" asks Rosamond, dwelling on the subject of the dead wife with a strange pertinacity.

"No."

"But if you did not love her, and she did not love you, why were you married?"

"She had been disappointed of a richer marriage, and I, as I have told you, had believed myself in love with her sister. We were married out of pique."

"Did you ever see the sister afterwards?"

"Often," with a strange smile. "Often enough to lose all regret for my own rejection. She married a friend of mine, but you are not likely to see her, for she lives in the greatest retirement. They were not happy. He was rich and she had nothing, and—"

"Oh, don't, don't!" comes almost with a moan from Rosamond. "Remember, Hugh, you are rich too and I am poor."

"My darling, no one could doubt your truth, no one in the whole world."

The door opens and Mrs. Granville enters, very much surprised to find Lord Fairleigh still there.

"How do you feel now, Rosamond? I would not come down before, because I hoped you were asleep."

"I have been asleep, Mrs. Granville."

"I found her asleep when I came in," explains the earl.

"I hope you have not been talking to her ever since, Lord Fairleigh. Rosamond, you look so flushed, I don't think the earl is at all a good nurse."

Miss Keith smiled.

"I have not talked so very much, Mrs. Granville, and I feel much better."

"Not tired?"

"Not at all. I mean to sit up to supper to-night and see the rector."

Since Rosamond's illness the pretentious dinner had been given up, and the old homely supper returned to. The earl had laughed very much at their changing their habits for him. Never a visitor easier to entertain than Lord Fairleigh, declared his host.

"And the fire is almost out, and the gas not lighted. Really the room does look comfortable. You might have thought to ring the bell, Lord Fairleigh," for she felt quite enough at home with the peer to indulge in a little scolding if he deserved it.

"We were talking—I mean I was talking, and we forgot the fire."

Mrs. Granville is hardly propitiated. A state of mind in which creature comforts, especially if they concern an invalid, can be forgotten is almost beyond her imagination. This gentle, pleasant-faced woman is a milder edition of the Martha of the bible, in that she is careful and troubled about many things. She begins

a pleasant stir, and soon the fire blazes and the room is bright with gaslight, then the rector comes in and congratulates Rosamond in his kind, earnest voice on her return to the downstairs world.

Lord Fairleigh longs to tell him there is another subject for congratulation, but refrains by an effort. Rosamond smiles on him from the sofa, and he sends himself somewhere where his eyes can meet hers, and so the evening passes.

Rosamond insists that this shall be a gala night in honour of her recovery, and that they shall have supper in the drawing-room. She has her way. Through all the months she has lived with Mr. and Mrs. Granville they have spoilt her pretty thoroughly in trifles, and it is hardly likely they will begin a different plan when she has just been given back to them as it were from the jaws of death.

Lord Fairleigh never takes his eyes from her face. There is a strange abyness in her smile, and yet the friends who were so very far seeing in the case of poor Harold Ashley absolutely guess nothing.

The little party disperse early. Mrs. Granville retires to help Rosamond undress, and the men adjourn to the study to smoke. An unusual silence follows for some time, then comes an abrupt question.

"She looks awfully ill; don't you think so, William?"

"Rosamond—yes, she looks terribly fragile. Still, I never expected her to get over it at all. It will be a most wonderful recovery. She owes her life to you, old fellow, under Providence."

"What does the doctor say about her?"

Now to William Granville Lord Fairleigh appeared only a kindly acquaintance, who, save from motives of humanity, could hardly care so very much whatever fate befell Rosamond. Had he known the real relationship of the parties, he would have answered very differently. As it was, he replied without the least attempt at concealment.

"He thinks that if she could weather the winter she would probably be as strong as ever, but that he dreads the cold weather for her, and he fears if she braves it in England she will probably go in a decline."

"You don't think she is in a decline now?"

His friend's anxiety surprises the rector, but again he attributes it to pity.

"No, I don't think that at all. I believe there is no actual disease, but there is great delicacy. Poor child, it's a thousand pities she did not marry Harold Ashley, then she would have had a husband to see after her. There are some women utterly unfit to take care of themselves, and Rosamond is one of them."

Lord Fairleigh privately determines to shorten by every means in his power the period during which Rosamond will still have to take care of herself.

"When do you think it would be advisable for her to go abroad?"

"Any time before the middle of October. My wife has written to Mr. Ashley about it, not the young fellow you saw, but his father, who is Rosamond's guardian. We mean to speak to her of the idea as soon as she is better, but it is hard for her to have to go among strangers after such an illness. Besides, Rosamond is a great deal too young and pretty to go travelling about by herself in my opinion."

"William," getting up and taking his hand, "be easy; she won't go alone; I shall take her."

"You can't," almost screamed the rector, in his bewilderment. "What on earth would people say. Such a thing was never heard of."

Poor Mr. Granville thought his friend's senses had left him. He was not a very strict follower of Mrs. Grundy, but the idea of a young and beautiful girl roaming about the Continent in company with a widowed earl of thirty, who was no relation to her, did strike him as too dreadful.

"They would say," returned the earl, calmly, "that it was the most natural thing in the world to hurry on our wedding so that she

might escape an English winter, and they would confess she could have no better travelling companion than her husband."

"Do you mean that you are going to ask her to marry you?" in amazement—"that you really think Rosamond would accept you?"

"I asked her this afternoon. I ought perhaps to have spoken to you sooner, but the act was utterly unpremeditated."

"I am very sorry."

Lord Fairleigh felt indignant. Whatever drawbacks to his making Rosamond a good husband he might know of himself he was very angry that anyone else should be "sorry" she was to marry him.

"That is unkind."

"Indeed, I did not mean it so, but I am sorry for you both. Rosamond is a sweet, graceful girl, but she knows nothing of the world, and is not the least fitted for a countess. Besides—forgive me, Hugh—she is so young I would rather she married one whose heart had not been buried in a grave."

Lord Fairleigh makes no denial of this, but his friend's lack of sympathy pains him.

"Please Heaven I will make her happy," he says, solemnly.

And the rector breathes "Amen" as reverently and earnestly as if he had been in church. It was a very short engagement, the briefest Mr. Granville had ever known. In September Lord Fairleigh had asked Rosamond to marry him. In the same month she became his wife.

Mrs. Granville groaned aloud. How could a trousseau fit for a countess be prepared in three weeks. Rosamond was an invalid still, more fit to be on a sofa with a novel than be married and take a foreign tour, but the earl heeded not a bit.

His darling should lie on the sofa and read novels afterwards if she liked, but she must be his wife at once. Mr. Ashley senior, who was referred to on the matter, was delighted to resign his ward into such noble hands—delighted for her, that is. He may have cherished a hope of her return to be the lasting adornment of the house in Bedford Square; but if he guessed his son's secret and sorrowed for him, he let no selfish scruples prevent his congratulating Rosamond very warmly on her engagement.

He had more than one business interview with the earl, but he never hinted to him the earlier engagement of his ward and its sad conclusion; the Desmonds were abroad and Sir Reginald with them; had they been in England he could hardly have refrained from writing to inform the marquis of Miss Keith's prospects, as it was he sent no information to anyone.

A little pang smote his conscience when he remembered the visit Rex had paid him, then he persuaded himself the baronet had got over it and went down with the earl to the simple wedding where he was to give away the bride.

It was a very quiet wedding, but also a very pretty one. Mr. Granville read the beautiful service, and his tiny daughter, in a white frock and blue sash, held Rosamond's gloves and made a charming little bridesmaid. No one was invited to the ceremony, no friends sent congratulations or presents, even the little village of Aston ignored the precise day and hour fixed for the transformation of its favourite into a countess.

Rosamond, leaning on Mr. Ashley's arm, walked to church in one of her summer dresses of tasteful white, the others were there already, and in half-an-hour she was Lady Fairleigh, and had given herself for all time to Sir Hugh Vane.

"I can't understand it a bit," said Mr. Granville, when she assisted the bride to don a warm travelling dress, "a month ago you were ill in bed and now you are Countess of Fairleigh?"

"It is very strange."

"When I was married we talked about it for months beforehand, and I had a white satin dress and a real lace veil; they say no luck ever comes of a wedding without the etceteras."

"Don't," pleaded Rosamond, a little faintly.

"You know we had no time to think of all that, dear Mrs. Granville. Surely you don't really fancy Hugh will love me less because I did not come to him in white satin and Brussels lace."

"If he did he ought to be ashamed of himself," was the calm rejoinder.

They were to stay in London until the morrow and leave early the next morning for the Continent. Lord Fairleigh was far too careful of Rosamond to risk her spending even a week of her married life in England after the doctor's verdict. Rooms had been taken for them at the Charing Cross Hotel, and before four o'clock Rosamond was lying on a sofa, her bonnet off and her short hair straying as rebelliously on her forehead as it had done before she became a countess.

The earl looked at her wistfully; his first marriage had been one long sorrow, and though he loved Rosamond intensely there was mingled with his love a burden of remorse.

"Why do you look so grave?" asked his young wife. "Hugh, is anything troubling you?"

"I was thinking of the long years between my age and yours, and hoping you would never regret to-day."

"I never shall—and, Hugh, there are not so very many years between us; I am almost twenty-one."

"No one will believe you, dear, you look about seventeen."

"It is my hair," a little regretfully. "I do wish it would make haste and grow."

"Don't be impatient. It will be long enough before we come back to England."

"Do you mean to stay away long then, Hugh?"

"As long as you please, my darling; for my part I think I could be well content never to see England again."

He folded a shawl over her and kissed her.

"We are going to dine at seven; the very best thing you can do is to go to sleep; remember you are half an invalid, and we shall have to start at a terribly early hour to-morrow."

"I am not at all tired. I had much rather talk to you."

"I am going out to put temptation out of your way; there are two or three things I want to get before we leave England."

He rang for her maid and left his wife in her charge, and then he went downstairs and hailed a hansom.

"Stop at the first post-office," he said to the driver.

Now as the earl was going abroad the next day for an indefinite time he could hardly be in the want of English postage stamps. He walked to the telegraph end of the counter and spoilt two or three forms before he had composed a message to his taste.

(To be Continued.)

FACETIÆ.

BREAKING AN AWKWARD SILENCE.

MRS. SMART (suddenly, to bashful youth, who has not opened his lips since he was introduced to her a quarter of an hour ago): "And now let us talk of something else!" —Punch.

REGULATION.

BARBER (to naval officer, who has had his hair cut): "Beard trimmed, sir—yes, sir—gunnery or torpedo, sir?" (Customer looks surprised.) "Which the torpedo officers has their beards p'inted, and the gunnery gents wears theirs a little more rounded, sir!" —Punch.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

(A fashionable lady, who recently bought a black boy in Egypt as page, has re-sold him for double the money. The reason is now for the first time disclosed.)

INTENDING PURCHASER: "If he is so valuable why do you part with him?"

OWNER OF SLAVE: "Why, the truth is, my

husband has some old-fashioned notions about the sale of blacks, and thinks I was wrong to buy him. So we have resolved, on conscientious grounds alone, to part with him—if we can get our price!" —Funny Folks.

A CRUSHER.

OLD GENTLEMAN (whose cellar is his pride and boast, to visitor, after dinner): "And now, sir, you shall taste some good port."

AFFABLE DONKEY: "Oh, pray don't send out for anything more on my account." —Judy.

VERY EXTRAORDINARY—It is a most extraordinary thing about a dentist that, the more he stops, the more he gets on. —Judy.

WANTED TO KNOW—Can it really be true that ladies are called "mum" because they talk so little. —Judy.

EVIDENTLY THE WRONG SHOP.

NOBLEMAN: "Haw! I want to be measured for a suit of clothes, and, haw, I want you to put plenty of padding in the front of my coat, so that I shall look military. Do you understand?"

INDEPENDENT TAILOR (who does not care for the style of his new customer): "Yes, sir; would you like one or two sacks?"

(Nobleman collapses.) —Judy.

SHOCKING.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER (gently): "You must be 'born again,' you know, Tommy?"

TOMMY (doubtfully): "Yes, miss."

S. S. T.: "Don't you wish you were born again, Tommy?"

TOMMY (more doubtfully still): "Well, no, miss; not while father's out o' work."

S. S. T.: "Why?"

TOMMY: "Because I might be twins." —Judy.

A CLUB "STUD"—Y.

"WELL, you know, if I did call my one horse a stud, it was your idea, don't you know?"

"STICK to it; stud is a good word, though it be only a solitaire!" —Fun.

A TAKE DOWN FOR "SMUDGE."

CLERGYMAN: "A charming landscape, sir?"

PAINTER: "It's very kind of you to say so, I'm sure; I've done my best, but I'm afraid it's not half up to the thing itself."

CLERGYMAN: "What thing itself?"

PAINTER: "Why, the original."

CLERGYMAN: "I was referring to the original." —Fun.

GROWING UNCERTAINTY.

SQUIRE: "Fine weather like this, farmer, will raise things nicely."

FARMER: "'Ees, squire, but I hopes so be as it won't raise the rents agen." —Fun.

A NICE DISTINCTION.

(Scene:—French restaurant.)

CUSTOMER: "I see by the rules of the restaurant, you are not permitted to take anything?"

WAITER: "Take! Oh, no, m's'r. It is, seulement, what you shall please to give me!" —Funny Folks.

THE LATEST FASHIONABLE COMPLAINT.

LADY AMATEUR: "Can you tell me if any ladies have been sketching down here? I saw some easels in a garden I passed just now."

AGREEABLE PEASANT: "Measles, miss! Yes, miss, two ladies down 'ere they's ketched it; and real pleased, I 'ear, they be about it too—cos it's so fashionable with the hup-grown hupper crust now. I daresay there's a chance for yer, miss." —Fun.

HAU HAU!

A MAN named Thomas, charged at the Mansion House with drunkenness, consumed no less than six gallons of water during the twenty-four hours he was in custody. We have no hesitation in affirming that at times there must be a good deal in that man, and though he has got himself into trouble, it must be admitted that he was full of good pints. —Fun.

OUT OF THE SHELL.

SUB: "What a lucky dog you are, Major;

Lovely girl! Lots of tin. Suppose you'll be for leaving the service?"

MAJOR: "They want me. Oh, it's all fair enough! If I sell out, pa-in-law 'll shell out; d'ye see?" —Fun.

NELLY DEAN.

ONE evening, when the breeze was blowing

Gently across the moonlit sea,
I on the ocean's breast was roving,
And Nelly Dean was there with me;
On shore the lights had almost faded,
No sound was heard to mar the scene,

And I a tale of love was telling
To bright-eyed, fairy Nelly Dean.

I told her of my one great passion,
How it was wearing out my life;
I told her in a plain, blunt fashion,
And asked her to become my wife;
She answered, while her cheeks were blushing,

"I love you, as you've plainly seen;"
And, as she spoke, she smiled upon me

The sweet, bright smile of Nelly Dean.

What though her cheeks have lost their brightness?

What though her hair has lost its gold?

What though her step now lacks the lightness

That it possessed in days of old?

To me she's ever been a treasure,
She's ever been my own true queen,
And still I ever think with pleasure,
Of when I rowed with Nelly Dean.

Long years have passed since I went rowing,

Far out upon the ocean tide,
Yet now, as then, my heart is lighted,
When Nelly Dean is by my side.

A. V. N.

SCIENCE.

A CASE OF MELANOSIS.

For some months a physician has had under treatment an infant afflicted with the rare disease, melanosis, in an aggravated form. The child was born with a fair complexion, dark eyes, and brown hair. Soon after birth he began to turn dark of skin, the colour deepening from yellow to saffron, and finally to black. The colour was uniform all over the body, except at the joints where it was a little darker, and in the palms of the hands where it was lighter. The once brown hair grew stiff and jet black, and the eyes also grew darker, so that the line between the pupils and the iris could not be distinguished.

In spite of medical treatment the boy became worse, and grew very weak, all the time the colour of his skin deepening. At last he became as black as a full-blooded negro. Then he was attacked by convulsions, which grew more frequent and violent until they threatened the child's life. It was in one of these that Dr. Reynolds was called in. He succeeded in curing the spasms, and then devoted his attention to the strange disease which afflicted the child. He at once recognised it as melanosis or pigmentation, which is mentioned in the books in a general way, but there is no case given where it developed all over the body. This was more than sixteen months ago, the child being then thirteen months old. Since then the boy has greatly improved, by degrees becoming lighter, until now he is of a light chestnut brown colour. The case has naturally attracted much attention from physicians.

EARTHQUAKE SHOCKS SUPERFICIAL.

THE superficial character of an earthquake was noticed some months ago. Here is a similar experience. A miner at work in a mine on Prospect Mountain says that while the tremor was plainly felt by his partners on the surface, he, at a depth of eighty feet, noticed nothing unusual. The same miner says that through an experience of fifteen years underground he has observed one peculiar phenomenon, namely, that loose stones and bits of earth in mines are sure to fall between twelve and two o'clock at night. About this time it seems that everything begins to stir, and immediately after twelve, although the mine has been as still as the tomb before, the fall of little particles of rock and earth will be heard, and if there is a caving piece of ground in the mine it is sure to give way.

ACID PROOF CEMENT.—Make a concentrated solution of silicate of soda, and form a paste with powdered glass. This simple mixture is said to be invaluable in the operations of the laboratory where a luting is required to resist the action of acid fumes.

FURTHER evidence tending to show that copper is not a true poison has been obtained in France. The idea that the salts of copper are not true poisons has been derived from the observation that they are always thrown off the stomach when taken in quantity.

CECIL'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOVE AND DUTY.

IN a moment Lady Kate's heart went out towards the man to whom she had given her first deep, passionate love. She forgot the chasm that yawned between them, the ties of duty that bound her to another man. The pallor, the pain of Cecil's face smote upon her like a reproach.

"Cecil," she said, "Cecil, why do you look so wild and so sad? Answer me."

"And you ask me that?" he answered, folding his arms, drawing back, and looking at her fixedly. "You, who have planted a dagger in my heart, poisoned my life, and lightly trampled on it."

"I!" she answered, with a bitter laugh. "You but mock me, Cecil Kenfrew, and I—I am but a weak idiot to pity you. Your sorrow, whatever it may be, can have nothing to do with Kate Ormond, or, rather, the Marquise de St. Germaine," she added, in an ironical tone. "Perhaps you have lost money, or some relative is dead. You cannot attribute your grief to me in any way?"

She asked the question with a strange bitterness, and Cecil looked at her with eyes full of deep wonder, and a sort of wild hope.

"Not to you?" he answered. "When you were my promised bride; when all things were arranged for our marriage; when our home was prepared, and the flowers in the garden abloom to give you welcome. And then you send Pomfret to me with a false tale of your disfigurement, and you pray me to put off our wedding—to write to the clergyman to do so. Then you refused to answer my letters. I saw you in the Row with the man who is now your husband. I looked at you and you passed me with bitterest scorn—with annihilating contempt. I wrote again, and received no reply. Then comes the morning of your marriage—the marriage in which I was to have taken part. I rush to the church, and meet you walking down the aisle a bride."

Kate's blue eyes dilated with a horrified surprise; she grew deathly pale.

"You—you," she gasped, and she clutched at the back of a chair for support, "you mean to tell me that you thought I was false? Oh, Cecil, am I going mad? I wrote and wrote to

you during that week while you were in Staffordshire, and I had received no answer up to the day fixed for our marriage. I arose, dressed, stole out quite early, as we had planned, and took a cab to the Gray Inn's Road. We found the church closed. We feared some mistake, and hurried to the house of the vicar, who showed us a letter from you asking that the marriage might be put off until the following Monday. Can you, then, be astonished that I resolved never to speak to you again? You offered no explanation—you never wrote a single line. True, you rushed out into the hall once, looking like a madman, when I was going to the opera with my mother and the marquise, but that was the only sign you made. I saw you, it is true, in the park, but I was too full of indignation to notice you, and the next morning I was married to Henri, my husband. You thrust yourself in my way as I was leaving the church a bride, as if you were determined to show the world your power over me, and humiliate to the dust the woman whose love you had spurned, whose heart you had broken."

"Then a traitress, a serpent, a fiend in human form, has come between us," said Cecil, in a voice hoarse with rage. "Pomfret, your infamous maid, who deserted you in the street, is at the bottom of all this—she, who tried to throw us in each other's way at the fancy ball, she, who fanned the flame of our mutual love, then thrust herself between us that she might blight our lives. She deserves the direst punishment that can be given, and yet the law is powerless to strike her. You will turn her out at once—this night—will you not?"

The two lovers were gazing into each other's pale, scared, passionate-wrought faces, amazement, disbelief of the existence of the cruel plot that had deprived them of each other, were depicted upon their countenances; then conviction of its truth, as the memory of various facts connected with the infamous scheme came back to both of their minds, altered the expression of those eloquent eyes. Cecil made a step towards her.

"Kate, my own darling," he murmured, "still my own in heart and soul, despite the cruel falsehoods that have come between us, the belief that you had made my wretched heart your plaything almost drove me mad. I threw up the excellent position of land agent which my generous patron had offered me. I sold the furniture and returned him the money which he had lent me; then I was ill for three or four weeks with a kind of brain fever. I took the first lodgings that I saw without making any inquiry as to the character of the people. They neglected and robbed me. When I arose, weak and worn, from my bed, I found nearly all my clothes, my watch, and my money gone. I felt wretched and reckless, and possessed of but one idea. It was to follow you and your husband till I found an opportunity for a private interview with you, to upbraid you with your wickedness and then to curse you to your face."

"Do not ask me how I have managed to find the means to follow you here. I sold what few books the thievish people of the lodgings had left me and a ring or two, and that money paid my passage to France, then I walked on here. Remember I know the language, and nothing comes amiss to me. My adventures during the last few weeks would fill a volume. I have worked on the roadside and on farms; I saved an old man's life who was driving a covered waggon on the road between Moulins and La Harpe, a small village: the horses ran away and were hurrying towards a lime pit—an awful chasm that yawned a few hundred yards ahead. At the risk of my own life I stopped those horses, but my left wrist was wrenched nearly out of joint, and a few moments after the terrified beasts were calmed down and pacified I sank almost fainting by the roadside. The old man whom I had saved was rather lame, that was how it was he had been unable to leap out of the van. He was very grateful, he made me journey with him in his van, he gave me food and wine, and he asked me what present he should make me. I chose a flute which he had among many other things in his van. He

was a kind of travelling auctioneer, a little like the 'Cheap Jacks' who go about with vans and set up open air sales in England, and this flute was sweet toned; I chose it as an easy means of gaining food while I followed you and your husband on your bridal tour.

"Thus I followed you. When I felt hungry or thirsty I approached a gentleman's house, or hotel, or farm, or a village inn, and produced my flute and played airs merry or plaintive as the whim seized me, and in all cases people flocked out and gave me pieces of silver, or invited me into the house to sit down and partake of their hospitality. I have been considered a proficient on the flute and I play passing well, and all this humiliation I have endured that I might seek your presence—I, in my shabby garments, haggard, worn, wild-looking, not to tell you that as long as I lived I should adore you in spite of your cruelty, that I would have hidden from you—but to tell you that I counted you, for all your beauty and your pomp, a very demon of wickedness for the injury you had done, and now I know you for what you are—noble, gentle, divine as I thought you at first, and, in spite of everything, I am happy, Kate, for you still love me, do you not?"

The separated lovers were both so absorbed that they did not hear either a footstep or the rustle of a skirt in the next room; they did not see Pomfret kneeling on the floor, holding her very breath lest the sound of it should reach them, pale, with dilating eyes and closed shut teeth, and the look of an evil spirit in the ghastly face, listening to the words they might utter, hoping for a chance to hurl Lady Kate to ruin.

"You still love me, do you not?"

"Yes," Kate answered, after a pause; "yes, but only now, Cecil, as a woman may love a cherished memory, or weep over a grave in which her brightest hopes lie buried, for I desire to keep the commandments of Heaven—I am another man's wife."

Blank utter silence for a space. The pallor of the kneeling Pomfret changed to a hideous purple hue.

"Foiled," she said in her heart, "foiled when I have laid this trap so well, when I would give ten years of my life to brand her with the name of adulteress, and to make her despicable in my lord's eyes. Foiled! Oh, if her prudery and pious nature prove too strong for Cecil's love—if temptation is resisted, and what is called goodness triumphs, I must still make it appear that she is false. Ah, my lady, how your humble servant hates you and longs for the time to come as come it must and will, when you shall stand begging your bread at the corners of London streets, dressed in the sorriest of rags—but before then Cecil Renfrew must have been sent into penal servitude for life as we have planned."

"I love you, Cecil, but only for the memory of the past, which is still precious to me; only as a wife may love one to whom she once gave her maiden heart—a wife, Cecil, who may one day be a mother, and that is a name so holy that all other human aims and loves must give way before it. If I had been your wife I would have striven to be the best wife in all Christendom, and now as the wife of Henri it is still my aim to do my duty. Let me help you, Cecil, as a sister might help a brother—let me give you money."

"Ha, I shall trap them yet!"

Positively in her excitement Pomfret hissed these words, but they who had been lovers were far too much absorbed in each other to give them heed.

"Kate," said Cecil, sorrowfully, "Kate, do you think me so mean? No, it is impossible that you should think I would owe one shilling to you and your husband. I would rather die—you ought to know that. No, let me go away. I know that you are too good for earth, as far above me as the stars. I must worship you even as those of the old faith worship their Madonna. As for my life it is a wreck, but yours may be as sweet, noble, as useful, a living prayer, a holy life dedicated to charity and all good works, such a life as I have dreamed of. For myself, forget me, or only think of me in the twilight for a few

moments. If you have little children, and if you teach them to say their prayers, ask them to pray for Cecil Renfrew, a wanderer upon the face of the earth—whose life a scheming woman has smitten with a curse, and dismiss that fiend, that woman called Pomfret."

"I will," Kate spoke, clearly and loudly.

Pomfret, listening in the next room, heard the words and she grinned—we cannot say she smiled, the expression is too mild. A distorted, horrible face was hers when she heard Cecil kiss the hand of the woman he had loved and lost, and then steal away with almost echoless footsteps through the corridors that led out to the moonlit garden of the chateau, and then Pomfret heard Kate fall upon her knees and lift up her sweet young voice in prayer for Heaven's blessing upon Cecil Renfrew, that he might learn to love duty and ever more to cleave to that which is right, and that he might find happiness in well-doing and prosper all the days of his life.

"Have they then escaped me?" Pomfret asked herself, as she arose from her knees. "Have they? No, I will work your ruin yet, my lady."

Kate strove to be very loving and dutiful to her husband as the days went on, but she was sensible of a certain coldness and hardness in his tone which smote most painfully upon her sensitive hear. She had not a soul in that lonely chateau in whom she could confide.

As for Pomfret she did not speak to her except of flounces, ribbons, laces, and satins. She had made up her mind to part with her perfidious maid, but still Kate was gifted with a large share of common sense, and she felt that to come to open rupture with her maid here in the heart of a strange country, among the mountains of Switzerland, would cause remark—would make the marquis wonder.

She did not forget that very strange conversation with her husband on the evening after their marriage, when, in the railway carriage, he had told her then that he knew that she had loved her father's secretary, and she had been honest enough not to deny it; while at the same time she told the marquis that her love and respect for Cecil were gone.

If he should ever hear that the unhappy lover had followed her on her wedding tour on foot, had penetrated into her presence, had entered into explanations, been forgiven, kneeled at her feet, kissed her hand, and parted from her if not a favoured lover still as a friend, beloved as a brother—if the marquis should hear all this he would be (Kate knew it by instinct) angry, with a terrible anger, none the less violent because of late the burning ardour of his love for his beautiful young wife seemed to have strangely cooled.

"Can I have already a rival?" Kate asked herself.

If a woman has even only a moderate liking for her husband the bare idea of a rival is almost maddening to her, that is if she is a true and pure-minded woman with wisely instincts, and a love in the main for "whatsoever things are of good report."

Kate had given her first girlish, impassioned love to Cecil, but when she believed him false she had turned to the marquis, married him, striven with all her might to do her duty by him. Henri de St. Germaine was one of the handsomest, most fascinating men in Europe, and it came to pass that Kate gave him much of her heart—it was a large and generous, and affectionate and noble heart.

Her love for poor Cecil passed into the moonlit, mysterious, melancholy region of memory. She was noble and true souled, and she crushed all vague yearnings as mean, ignoble, unworthy, and then the poor child found all at once that her husband was not as he had been.

It seemed that he took no pleasure in her gay and innocent conversation; if she went and sat before one of the huge grand pianos in one of the grand old rooms of the Chateau Bronté, if she sang very sweetly and accompanied herself, he scarcely seemed to listen; and when she

ceased he scarcely offered her thanks. He wandered off in the wood followed by the huge dogs which he had brought from England; if she offered to accompany him he told her that he was going further than she could walk.

"Then let us ride or drive, Henri; we have good hired horses in the stables."

"No, I hate driving or riding this autumn weather, I like to stroll a great distance and then sit down to rest."

There were some few neighbouring chateaux where noble French or Swiss families resided, and after a while some of these ladies and gentlemen called on the marquis and marchioness. In a little time Kate found that her husband only meant to return the visit of one out of the four families who called, and his choice fell on the very persons most distasteful to Kate.

A certain old German baron, famed for his dissipated life in London, in Paris, in Rome, had hired the chateau of an absentee noble; the chateau was called St. Denis. The Baron Plomb, that was his ugly name, had many visitors that autumn at St. Denis.

He was an old gentleman of fine tastes who very much appreciated the fine arts, music, sculpture, painting, poetry, the drama, and St. Denis was filled with artists and artistes of all descriptions this autumn. When old Baron Plomb first called at Chateau Bronté it was one hot afternoon in the first days of September.

Kate, feeling languid and half sad, she scarcely knew why, was leaning back on a couch which had been carried out to the stone terrace facing the mountain; on that side the sun had no power.

Kate wore a white dress of some light gauzy stuff. Her fair hair was bound with a pale green ribbon. Her sole ornament was a bunch of wood violets placed like a brooch on her black lace collar. She had a book of poems in her hand—poems of the more sad and sentimental sort, treating of lost love, when all at once she heard the sound of ringing laughter on the terrace.

She was too well bred to show that she was startled or surprised when she saw the old Baron Plomb, whom she had only met once before in her life, standing before her with his hat in his hand; his white hair and enormous moustache, likewise white as snow, gave nothing venerable to his cynical, clever, handsome old face with its finely cut features and mocking eyes.

"A thousand pardons," said the baron. "Allow me to introduce to you, madame, Mademoiselle Victorine Sala and Madame von Fitte, also Monsieur Pierre, of whom you have probably heard as one of the most distinguished novelists in France."

Kate arose stately and fair as a lily. She bowed, smiled, and did the honours of the chateau to her unexpected guests in a very graceful, charming fashion. All the while she was sensible of the eyes, the smile, the beauty of Mademoiselle Victorine Sala—eyes, smile and beauty affected her as no human eyes or smile had ever affected her before.

What was it—how was it? Madame von Fitte was a great singer. Everybody knew that she had sung at the opera during the early part of the London season. She was a large extravagant blonde, with a loud voice, loud manners, a mouth that suggested a gourmande, one who cared infinitely for the pleasures of the table, and appreciated good wines and good cookery more than all the music or poetry in the world. Kate hastily judged her as a vulgar celebrity with whom she wished not to associate.

Monsieur Pierre was known as the writer of the most immoral stories that have disgraced French literature during the last ten years. He was a little ugly man, with thick lips, and searching, small, restless grey eyes. But Victorine—there is such a thing as a wisely instinct, jealousy apart, points out to a true souled woman the rival who would fain supplant her and trample her into the dust. Kate, beautiful as a garden lily, knew this black-haired Victorine for a rival the moment she looked upon her.

CHAPTER XXII.

VICTORINE THE ACTRESS.

A woman big and brown.
Who was the rage in town,
Who sang and dressed and dined,
And had an empty mind.

BLACK-HAIRED Victorine—was she beautiful? Yes and no—yes, in the sense of possessing a splendid contour of form—eyes magnificent in depth, clearness and brilliancy; eyes black as night, large, glittering with unsuspected depths in them; eyes in which, so to speak, a man's very soul might lose itself; eyes which could languish or dart fiery flames of love or hate at the will of their owner; weird, wonderful eyes.

The complexion was of a clear-brunette, colourless, that is untinged by even the faintest rose, and yet not pale; a warm brown like the hue of the olive, red lips, a mouth beautiful and yet sensual, with white teeth gleaming as in mockery when she smiled. A woman tall and grand and superb, with smooth cheeks, long black lashes, a nose rather insignificant, that somehow gave a want of dignity to the countenance, level black brows, a low, square forehead, massed over with rippling coal-black hair.

Such was Victorine Sala to look upon. She wore a close fitting dress of gold-coloured silk, with black satin trimmings, a gold-coloured feather in a hat of black satin, a large white camellia on her ample breast. Her age might have varied from twenty-five to thirty. A magnificent woman, large, bold, daring, triumphant—a woman with worldly success stamped upon her low brow, insolence painted on her ruddy lips.

Who was Victorine Sala? Nobody knew what she had been before the Baron Plomb became her patron, that was three years ago now, and he had then introduced her to the theatrical world of Paris as a great actress. She spoke both French and English with equal ease and fluency. Her voice was harsh both in singing and speaking, but she was a consummate actress of certain roles.

She could take the part of an intriguante, a coquette, or a furious virago, to perfection. Also she danced well, and though her voice was harsh it was clear, and she managed it well when singing in burlesque or opera bouffe; and under the patronage of the Baron Plomb, mademoiselle became the fashion, if not the rage, in Paris, Vienna and Milan.

She was a woman who exercised a powerful fascination over certain kinds of men. She was quite heartless, yet she was of a sensuous nature, loving good wines and rich food and luxurious fruits and bright flowers, gay trappings, luxurious carriages, fleet horses, splendid furniture, soft carpets, everything that ministered to the senses.

She had a certain kind of daring wit; she was very merry, and mocked pitilessly at everybody who was plain or sad, or in ailing health, or poor, or weak, or elderly. Here was the instinct of the animal who with his strong fellows sets on a sick comrade and wounds or tramples him to death.

She had no pity for the poor. She was the kind of woman to meet with success in the world, and she met with it. Yes, Kate knew her for a rival and an enemy the moment her eyes rested on her.

"It is so hot," said the young marquise, "that I have come out to sit on the terrace."

Victorine scarcely smiled. She had accepted a low velvet seat which had been placed for her by one of the footmen, and she listlessly picked up the volume of poems from the end of the couch, opened it, made a grimace, and threw it down again.

Kate had been watching her. The colour deepened on her fair cheek. She understood without being told that Mademoiselle Victorine despised poetry and those who read it.

"She shall never come to the chateau again," said Kate to herself.

Then she turned away and began with gentle, well-bred ease to converse with the Baron Plomb, and soon she rang a silver handbell.

"We still carry the London fashion of afternoon tea with us here into the Swiss mountains," she said, smiling. "Will you step into the salon; it is all prepared."

She looked at Victorine as she spoke. Victorine smiled a careless, almost insulting smile, and rose. The baron bowed and offered Kate his arm. Madame von Fitté laughed a loud laugh, and said she was terribly thirsty, and thrust her arm through that of the novelist, Monsieur Pierre, and Victorine broke into a derisive titter, for the novelist had not intended to offer his arm to madame, but to Victorine, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, and the look of blank disappointment on the ugly, clever face of the little clever man amused the cruel beauty.

They all went into the large salon, where a dainty afternoon tea was tastefully laid out. Old china, rare flowers, delicious fruits, made a little poem of the tea table. Monsieur Pierre looked at the tapestried walls, the antique chairs, the old paintings, with the interest of a man of letters who is always seeking materials for the descriptions that enhance a story, but Victorine began to eat grapes, peaches, and cream tarts with avidity.

How was it that Kate felt so uncomfortable—so anxious that her visitors should depart before the return of her husband? All at once Victorine arose, and without saying a word, passed through the great open French window out to the stone terrace. Then indeed she looked back over her shoulder, and she said, carelessly:

"I am going to find my way to the gardens. I like before all things wandering about in strange places alone. Please nobody follow me," flashing a look of stern command upon Monsieur Pierre, and then mademoiselle passed out of sight of her friends.

She went swiftly along the terrace, and down some steps to a lawn. At the end of this was a belt of tall beech trees, and instinct told mademoiselle that the gardens lay behind. She was not long in finding her way to them. They were beautiful gardens, those at Chateau Bronté, broad paths of yellow gravel, level lawns, green as emerald, with here and there gay flowers embroidering them in fanciful devices, little alleys of blooming shrubs, late flow'ring roses, and many coloured rhododendrons leading off to thickets of white clematis and purple wisteria, amid which fountains sparkled—fountains of white marble, all of them masterpieces of the sculptor's art.

Victorine wandered on; the hum of the bees as they dipped into the flower cups, the songs of the birds on the branches, the flitting of the glorious winged butterflies which in this district seem to fill the air with living jewels, emerald, sapphire, amethyst, and ruby, the grand calm background of the mountains, the ripple of the water, the rustle of the trees; none of these things caused mademoiselle to pause or ponder or admire.

No, not for one single moment. On she went, deep she dived into the flowering thickets, and then when she came to a fountain she sat down and looked about her. Presently she put her red lips into a peculiar shape and she whistled a long shrill whistle.

After that she took off her black satin hat with its gold-coloured feather, and she leaned her dark head lazily against the trunk of an acacia tree. She closed her eyes; she even slept, for her brow was fanned by the cool breeze, and a pleasant drowsiness crept over her.

Victorine was the kind of young woman who always took life easily, and enjoyed to the full every possible advantage that came in her way. Thus feeling drowsy she yielded at once to the desire for sleep, and straightway passed off at once into the land of dreams.

"There is nothing so potent in procuring man or woman a quiet conscience," remarks some wise philosopher, "as a good digestion." A very cynical observation, but like most caustic sayings, it has its grain of truth. Victorine Sala was not a good woman, indeed

she was one who disdained and disbelieved in all human goodness, a woman who secretly mocked at the names of virtue and truth and charity.

She was more than negatively to be defined as simply not a good woman; she was actively a bad one, but she seldom had a bad dream, and she would have told her confidants that the sole reason for this was that her appetite was excellent and her digestion perfect.

She slept. She was rudely awakened by somebody bending a branch of an apple tree which grew close to the fountain and then letting it flap into her face—probably this buffet was even a little painful. She awoke with a start, sprang to her feet and uttered some oaths in French and afterwards in English. Her great black eyes flashed angrily, she saw standing before her, in the neat becoming garb of a domestic, none other than Miss Cecilia Pomfret.

"You ugly idiot," she said, furiously, "you great hateful cochin."

"Call me a pig in English at once if you like," Miss Pomfret answered, with a cold smile. "As for my being ugly—well, that is not true; if I were dressed as you can dress people would call me handsome. As for you, you are not handsome, you are big and brown. You have black eyes and red lips and white teeth, and your heart is cold as ice. You feel nothing, and thus you make men care for you—that is a kind of law of nature, and you can sit with her as an equal. You have hundreds of pounds where I only have a few shillings, and you are to become a marquise, and one day a duchess—are you? And you can sleep and loll and dawdle while I have to sew and run up and downstairs, doing the bidding of the creature I hate as if I were a dog. I was determined I would make the apple tree give you a slap in the face. I wish it had made your eye water or your nose red, but your face is as if it was cut in stone."

And now anybody who knew the faces of those two women, Pomfret and Victorine, would have seen the strong subtle likeness between them. Victorine was by far the handsomer; she was a year or two younger than Pomfret, but there could be no mistaking them for other than sisters, or at least, first cousins when their faces were studied together. Anyhow, the eyes of mademoiselle flashed fire, and her lips were curled in a bitterness.

"Never mind," she said, quietly, "I will repay this with interest one day. Now to business. Tell me, is this white cat he calls his Kate quite devoted to him so that we can't cast a slur upon her? You know I have not the least patience. I have made up my mind to marry Henri, Marquis de St. Germaine, because he is the richest man in Europe, and he will one day be a duke. If he had met me before he was tied to this woman he would have fluttered round me, admired me, and have left me. A thorough man of the world like this marquis is never desperate about one woman till he is chained to another. When I saw him at the theatre at Geneva a month ago for the first time I was acting, and I saw that he was struck with me. His wife was not with him. I heard who he was, I know him then. He had married the very girl whom you and I, ourselves then tiny children, have learned to hate from the day of her birth. A bright thought struck me, and I resolved to win his love."

"I got an introduction to him that very night, and I fascinated him at once. After that I sent him my likeness, and you tell me that for days and days he carried it out into the woods with him and talked to it like a maniac, then he grew cool to his doll of a wife. After that I procured an invitation to the chateau of the Baron Plomb, my old friend and patron; the baron invited him to dinner, since then he has been at the chateau nearly every day. He is mad for me, I keep him at bay—nothing less than his fortune and title will satisfy me. Tell me, then, can we make him divorce her, or must we kill her?"

Mademoiselle asked the question with the utmost coolness.

"I would rather let her live and suffer," Pomfret answered; "and, besides, if you kill a per-



[DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.]

son it would be so very dreadful if one were to be found out. But I think I have the materials for a cause celebre close at hand: first of all you must drive her mad through jealousy, when a woman or a man becomes jealous he or she are capable of the most extravagant actions."

"I have driven many wives frantic," said the diabolical Victorine, "for my simple amusement, but none of those husbands were rich enough for me to marry. Now this one is in every way desirable."

"Are you in love with him?" asked Pomfret.

"In love?" the other answered. "I don't understand what that means; he is rich and handsome and distingué; one would be proud of him in his uniform of an officer at a court ball, but, of course, now under the Republic he does not serve in the French army. Yes, he is handsome and clever. I admire his blue eyes; he gives me diamonds. I mean to become his wife, but I am impatient, it must come about quickly. I want you to help me to make this doll he calls Kate frantic. I mean to come and stay here in this chateau at once. Tell me," Victorine added, after a pause, "has not this doll a lover—could you not make the husband believe that she had trifled with his honour. He is so desperately in love with me that I feel sure he will not scruple to send her about her business if she gives him the least excuse."

"I think we can manage that," said Pomfret, "but you must not provoke me or show me your insolent pride. You must and shall remember that I am your own sister."

"I am not likely to forget that interesting fact, my dear," Victorine answered, scornfully. "And now suppose that we return to the house."

She arose as she spoke, shook out her gold-coloured silken skirts, and languidly nodded at her sister Cecilia.

"When I am a duchess, Cissy, I will marry you to some rich trader, so that you have plenty of money; you care for nothing else, not even if your trader is fat, old, ugly, is fond of

garlic if he is an Italian, or of beer if he is a German. Good-bye, my dear," and Victorine walked towards the house.

When she approached the terrace she saw her friends standing there, and with them not only the young Marquise Kate, but the tall blonde, fair-haired Marquis Henri, who came to meet her with extended hands, and eyes glittering with a certain fiery admiration. She received him coldly, languidly, giving him only the tips of her fingers.

"Let me sit down, if you please," she said, in English; "the afternoon is so hot, I am tired to death."

In an instant he had placed a chair for the actress. She sank into it and unfastened a fan of black and gold from her girdle. She handed this fan to the marquis.

"Fan me, will you?" she said; "I feel so exhausted?"

He took the fan obediently, and began to fan the modern Cleopatra as if he had been her Eastern slave. Victorine darted a look pregnant with cruelty at Lady Kate. The young wife, pale and calm, sat with a forced smile at a little distance from Victorine talking to the old Baron Plomb.

"Charmed to make your acquaintance, madame," said the old nobleman. "I had no idea that my friend Henri had so enchanting a wife."

Kate smiled and bowed.

"I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing your chateau, monsieur," she said, "but I hear that it is one of the finest in Switzerland."

"You must come next Monday week to the garden-party and ball I purpose giving," said the baron. "I shall have a band and cooks and some dancers and singers from Paris."

Kate bowed. She could not refuse, though her heart sank.

"I hope soon to return to England," she said to herself, "and to see nothing more of yonder horrible woman to whom Henri is devoting himself."

All at once the marquis came up to his wife,

bowed to the baron, then stooped down and whispered into Kate's ear.

"Invite Mademoiselle Victorine to stay with us. We will send a carriage for her luggage."

Kate's fair face flushed crimson to the roots of her hair. Her husband was looking at her coldly and sternly with his blue eyes.

"Not now," said Kate. "I am not well enough to entertain strangers."

"I will entertain her," the marquis said.

Kate bowed her head.

"An actress," she murmured.

"The rage of crowned heads. She has refused the hands of princes," said the marquis. "My dear Kate, while we are on the Continent, at least, try to leave your English pride behind in your smoky London that I so much detest."

At that moment Victorine in her yellow silk came up to the young wife. Looking at her she said:

"I have just accepted the invite of the marquis to remain at the chateau; he tells me you will send for my luggage."

"I am not well enough, madam, to entertain visitors!" said Kate.

She stood erect; a hectic colour burnt in her cheeks; her blue eyes flashed; but Victorine was equal to the occasion.

"Henri will amuse me," she said, "if you are top ill."

The marquis turned towards the shameless jade who was the fashion.

"Your luggage shall be sent for at once," he said.

"And now," said Victorine, "where is my cigar case? I will smoke for an hour or so before dinner."

"Am I turned out of my own house?" asked Kate of her bursting heart.

She bowed to her departing guests. In another ten minutes she was left alone on the terrace. Before her was the mountain; behind her was the setting sun. Her brain seemed on fire. A voice in her wild heart urged her to some desperate deed.

(To be Continued.)



[ON THE SANDS.]

CONQUERED BY LOVE.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

THE glorious summer sunset, flooding the beautiful beach at Hastings, illumined two youthful figures slowly walking towards Fairlight Glen. Lovers, without a doubt. A shy, tender joy irradiated the girl's face; fondest, truest devotion glowed in the eager looks of the young man whispering in her willing ear.

All Nature seemed to smile upon these young people, although they paid little heed to her, utterly absorbed in each other. The opalescent tints of the sky, the shimmer and glancing of molten gold upon the undulating waves, the dark and sombre crags standing out against the rose-tinted clouds, the yellow sands, the cheerful boats dancing on the water, skimming here and there like a flock of sea-birds, helped only to form a splendid background to these sauntering lovers, more interested in the oldest of old stories than in the most magnificent effects of sea and sky.

Truth to tell, it was the most important hour that had ever arrived in the short years of their lives, and the future did not look so roseate as these sunlit moments. Frank Ireton had avowed his love and obtained a response which made his heart thrill with joy. But he was going away, uncertain when he might return to England.

He had eagerly, earnestly implored Jannette Verity to marry him, and thus make sure of nothing separating them—had even urged her to leave England and go with him; but she had steadily refused. It is hard for a girl of eighteen to refuse the pleadings of her first love, doubly hard when her own heart whispers convincing arguments in his favour.

But Jannette was one of those rarely-gifted

beings—one with a deeply tender, fond heart, yet one who can suffer and be strong. No one, looking at her fair, fragile face and form, or into the depths of her innocent blue eyes, could have divined the noble, resolute soul that lay enshrined within.

"No, dearest Frank," she said, gently—her soft, melodious voice was almost her greatest charm—"I promise faithfully to wait until you can claim me—it may be in loneliness and poverty, in temptation and strife; but I cannot desert my duty. I cannot leave the one who has been to me father, mother, brother, sister—all I have in the world, when else I must have been helpless and alone."

"Jannette, love—"
"Nay. She has made many sacrifices for me; it is my bounden duty to make such poor offerings of gratitude as I may—some sacrifice for her dear sake. It is a painful choice which I am obliged to make," added the girl, with a little choking sigh, as she softly pressed her lover's arm. "But I must choose."

He caught both her hands—they looked so irresistibly pretty in the black lace mittens which made the slender fingers white as rose petals—he kissed the trembling prisoned hands, and his passionate soul gazed so pleadingly at her that she turned away her head lest she should yield.

"Darling, consider," he argued. "Your grandmother—whom I have learnt to love for your sake, if not for her own—she would never expect you to cloud and blight your young life, from a false sense of duty to her. It is not as if she were helpless or ill, or as if you had to toil for her. Therefore, why deny me the joy and encouragement you would give in the struggle that lies before me? But I ought not to entreat," he went on, with the peculiar kind of diplomacy used by lovers. "I have nothing but a hard, struggling life, with my deep, deep love to offer you."

Jannette stopped and looked at him. They were alone, under the sweet shadow of the overhanging hazel and alder trees, beneath which

the tinkling brook glided, singing merrily, sadly, joyously, pathetically—a sheltered spot, where many lovers' vows, faithfully kept, heartlessly broken, had been exchanged in the long, misty past years. The western sun shone full on her pure, candid, fearless face.

"I do not dread poverty," she said, the ring of truth in her accents. "I have never known aught else. I never desired riches. I should be almost sorry if you came back with wealth and station to offer me. When I have read about princesses and great ladies, I have never wished to be like them. But often, when I have read of women who have been compelled to fight against pain, poverty and misfortune, my heart has beat, and I have longed to be like one of them."

"Darling, sweet, you do not know what a real fight with the world means," said Frank. He had not for a moment doubted the truth of her reason for refusing to become his wife at once. "Would that I had wealth. If I had our way would be clear and bright. But I will say no more. You will be true, will you not? I know, I feel you will. You will write to me constantly? Indeed, I will not let you forget, for the only pleasure I can promise myself when away from you will be writing to you."

They continued their slow, sweet, sauntering ramble through the glen, until they at length reached the Dropping Well above. The place was deserted, and they spent some few delicious moments, watching the tiny streamlet trickling over its rock into the black hollow beneath; under the grey-green shadow of the rich foliage overhanging it. But time was passing only too swiftly; the soft, cool shades of evening warned them to turn away from this glimpse of Eden, and to retrace their steps.

The shortest way to Jannette's home lay across the fields and road, always a pleasant ramble. As they emerged from the fields into the road, a gentleman on horseback, unobserved by them, riding at a short distance, suddenly looked at the young couple as if petrified by amazement.

Having apparently assured himself that he

was not wrong in recognising at least one of the handsome figures, he turned his horse deliberately round, and slowly followed them. He was evidently not unwilling to be heard and seen, but was at too great a distance for his horse's steps to be readily noticed, and the lovers went on sublimely, happily unconscious of his proximity.

The cottage—it could hardly be dignified with the name of house—where Jannette lived was a pretty, picturesque little dwelling, the kind of half ideal place beloved by artists.

Roses and evergreens seemed to run wild all over its walls, making it a fragrant bower. It might have been the home of a fairy princess as it lay nestling there, the soft evening air bringing out the exquisite scent of the roses which clustered and clambered in a singular profusion. The wee garden lay like a handful of garnered fragrance, a faint yellow moon shining down upon it, mingled with the last dying light of day.

"Your grandmother would perhaps be displeased to see me, as it is getting so late," said Frank. "I had better leave you and come in the morning."

Mrs. Merriton solved this small difficulty by appearing in the porch. A glance showed her that the end foreseen by her for some time had arrived, and she held out a hand to each, a smile on her withered yet still handsome old face.

The gentleman who had followed unnoticed to the last had seen all, and waited until the young lovers went in. Then he slowly rode on. He was a stately man of perhaps fifty years of age, with a stern yet by no means unpleasant face, portly, well-dressed, evidently on excellent terms with himself.

"Soho, my worthy Master Frank," he said, half aloud. "I had no idea you were amusing yourself in this way. This kind of thing must be stopped, my good sir, and the sooner the better."

He rode on still slowly, plunged in reflection, until he reached the handsome row of houses called Pelham Crescent. A liveried servant came out and took his horse, while he entered what was obviously his own residence. He had returned only half-an-hour before dinner, and had only time to dress for that all-important meal. As he went down to the dining-room, he muttered with a half cynical smile:

"It is a fortunate circumstance, my dear nephew, that you have somebody to take care of you, or you would play the fool as others have done."

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Clinton had voluntarily been the cause of banishing his nephew Frank to Germany, placing him in a merchant's office in Berlin, he hated being alone. He therefore sat down to dinner that evening in a very bad humour. Dinner never waited for anybody in Mr. Clinton's house; that gentleman had never been known to be late. At length, full of excuses and apologies, flushed, and undoubtedly not so calm as usual, Frank hurried in.

"So, so!" exclaimed Mr. Clinton. "Welcome, sir; I hope you have not inconvenienced yourself by your haste?"

"I was delayed," began Frank, confusedly splashing some water into a tumbler.

"Oh, indeed," said his uncle, sarcastically. "Well, presently I wish to have some conversation with you on a certain matter."

Frank Iretton glanced uneasily across the table. But the stern eyes were bent on the silver épergne glittering between himself and his uncle. Mr. Clinton did not choose to speak until the sedate old butler had completely disappeared. Then he looked searchingly at the young man whose self-conscious face betrayed secrets under this inspection.

"You leave me to-morrow, my dear boy, therefore time is short. Of course, I take the strongest possible interest in your future, and I cannot allow you to fool away a life that may be

bright and prosperous. I have made you no promises as to what I may do for you."

"Uncle Philip!"

"I want you to help yourself," coolly proceeded Mr. Clinton, disregarding this interruption. "You will go into a house which has every chance to offer you. But, mark me, you must not play the fool by a poor, if not disgraceful marriage!"

"Sir—uncle!" stammered Frank, amazed by this unexpected attack.

"I understand that you have been—I suppose flirting—with a girl in this neighbourhood—a poor girl. I hope there is nothing worse; I hope and trust you have not promised to marry this—"

"I did not intend to deceive you, sir," said Frank, recovering his self-possession. "I love the girl to whom I suppose you refer. This evening I asked her to marry me."

"Well?"

"And she has promised to do so?"

A dead silence ensued for a few minutes. Mr. Clinton rose, walked to the chimney-piece, returned to his chair, then, having mused with knitted brows for some seconds, quietly lighted a cigar.

"I will not quarrel with you, Frank," he said, in a calm voice. "But if you ruin your prospects, and discredit our family by such a match, I will have nothing more to do with your affairs. If you lose my favour, you have nothing but your own entirely unaided efforts to rely upon. I had hoped that you would make a good marriage. I named to you a girl who has a handsome fortune, and as you said neither you nor nay, I imagined you were not averse to my negotiating the matter. Mark me. As you are leaving England for an indefinite time it will be an excellent opportunity of ending a folly which will simply ruin you. I do not speak in displeasure. I know what a young man's folly is. Once"—his voice suddenly faltered—"once, I, too, played the fool. I was dazzled by a girl's face, and believed a girl's false words, and would have married—for love. But, I will tell you the truth, she jilted me to marry a man who was able to offer all that girls covet. I don't blame her now, though I cursed her and hers at the time."

Mr. Clinton rose as he uttered these last words, and quitted the room, without giving his nephew a chance of making the slightest reply. Frank did not see his uncle until breakfast the next morning, and then not the least reference was made to the subject of disagreement. By the afternoon the young man was gone, on his journey to Berlin, with a sad heart.

CHAPTER III.

MR. CLINTON had been a shopkeeper in a large way of business in London. He had realised a respectable fortune, and retired. His only sister's only son, who had lived with him since a boy, was the sole object on which he could fix his affections, and he was resolved to leave nothing undone to make him happy and prosperous.

He did not know even the name of the girl whom Frank had avowed he meant to marry, and had seen her once only, on the evening when he had watched the lovers sauntering. But he judged by her home, and by the extreme simplicity of her dress, that she must be poor, and he had already determined on a match for Frank which was advantageous in the highest degree. He resolved to know the entire history of the young man's acquaintance with the girl who lived in the tiny rose-covered cottage, and went the shortest way to gain his object by writing to London for a private detective.

The detective came, heard as much as Mr. Clinton had to tell, potted about idly for a few days, dawdling about the town, about the green lanes, among the fishermen, then returned to Mr. Clinton with a minute report, calmly business-like.

The girl's name was Jannette Verity. Her father had been a draper in the town of

Hastings, but had failed for a large amount some months before his death—he had, in fact, put an end to his own life, under the pressure of his troubles.

His wife had died some months later, from grief and trouble. Miss Verity had been living with her maternal grandmother since her childhood. The old lady's scanty income was derived from some house property in Crowhurst.

Mr. Clinton listened with an unruffled face, but a tornado of anger in his heart. In the calmest tone, however, he gave the man further instructions. Miss Verity was expecting letters from Berlin; he required that these letters should not reach her, but should be brought to himself.

The detective bowed. His name was Perkins, he was silent and discreet, never looked or felt surprised, and he never made remarks. In two days Perkins brought a letter. Mr. Clinton coolly opened and read it.

There had evidently been one before it, but this contained nothing more interesting than long descriptions of people and places, and ardent protestations of affection. Mr. Clinton sniffed a sniff of displeasure, and lighting the foreign sheets of paper with a vosuvian, flung them in a blazing heap on the fender, there to consume away.

Then he ordered Perkins to remain at his post until further instructions, and to bring him all other letters from Berlin addressed to Miss Verity. Perkins had bribed the postman, a poor fellow not "passing rich" on sixteen shillings a week, who had a sickly wife and five children.

Mr. Clinton sent privately to Berlin to have Miss Verity's letters intercepted there, and a day or two later one reached him, which he read, and destroyed. However, with all this bold play, Mr. Clinton did not clearly know what course he should eventually pursue.

His chief object was to create, if possible, a misunderstanding and estrangement between the lovers; but what was to be done to effectually end what he regarded as a disgraceful piece of misconduct on his nephew's part, he could not easily plan.

Full of all kinds of schemes and plots, he was slowly riding in the direction of St. Leonard's, beneath the shadow of the great black rocks, followed by his magnificent retriever dog, Jasper. Suddenly his unprofitable reflections were broken in upon by a cry of alarm.

Turning, he saw a beautiful young girl standing in an attitude of some fright, faced by Jasper, who was trying to bully her, and pretending to bar her sight of way with his most pugnacious air.

"Down, sir! Down, you rascal," cried Mr. Clinton, severely.

But the girl was trembling with alarm and he was obliged to dismount.

"Are you frightened?" he asked, going up to her.

She raised her lovely innocent blue eyes, full of purple shadows and mysterious depths, and looked at him, saying in a soft, pathetic voice:

"Not much, sir."

Mr. Clinton remained as if spell-bound, gazing at her with an incomprehensible expression—amazement, fear, intense yearning. He seemed unable to speak or move. Jannette Verity drew back with some dignity, making him conscious of the oddity of his behaviour.

Not daring to trust himself to utter a word, he raised his hat abruptly, and re-mounting, rode off, followed by Jasper. The young girl swiftly walked away in the opposite direction, hardly recovered from her agitation, which had been increased by the stranger's conduct.

"Who is she? A spirit from the dead?" Mr. Clinton said, half-aloud, as he slackened rein and glanced around him. "Her face, her look, her voice—herself. What a dolt I must have been not to try to obtain her name. Who can she be? My lost love herself, as I first saw her. It is like a vision of the past. Great heavens, I

am perfectly unnerved. I must find out who she is. She must live near this—but perhaps she is only staying here."

Thus ran his disordered thoughts. The face of this girl haunted him, her musical voice echoed in his ears. Even in his dreams, like some sweet infatuation, her figure floated before him, the intonation of her voice breathed softly into his heart, although he had heard only three words from her lips.

Every day he rode out in the same direction, always at the same hour. Every day he saw the same beautiful, gentle creature who had so fatally risen before him; but not once could he summon courage to address her, only venturing a look of interest in response to the shy smile she gave him.

Each day he rated himself for his folly in not ascertaining who she was. Not once did he imagine that she was Jannette Verity, the girl whom he had forbidden his nephew to marry. The one evening when he had seen Frank with Jannette he had caught only a glimpse of her figure, without seeing her face, and fancied she was quite a different person.

"I must crush this boyish nonsense," he said to himself. "I will go that road no more."

He felt thoroughly ashamed of letting a past sentiment again make him captive. It was absurd to ride every day for the sake of a glance at the shadow of his old lost love. He dared not trust the secret of this boy's dream to his obedient slave Perkins.

Some feeling he did not choose to avow, hardly confessed to himself, kept him tongue-tied. Otherwise he would have learnt this girl's name within a few hours. Thoroughly out of humour with himself, he prepared to visit Mrs. Merriton. He hoped to be able to either bribe or bully the lady.

As he was going out a telegram was handed to him. It came from the manager of the house of business in Berlin, informing him that Frank had slipped down a steep flight of stairs in the warehouse, and had so seriously sprained his right arm that he was confined to bed.

What would have been direful news at another time to Mr. Clinton was not altogether unwelcome now. He went down to the post-office, and telegraphed back that no expense was to be spared on Frank's account, and that he was to be kept as free from anxiety as possible. Then he pursued his way relentlessly to Mrs. Merriton's cottage.

CHAPTER IV.

A TALL, strong young country woman, of about twenty years of age, round of arm and ruddy of face, answered Mr. Clinton's sharp, authoritative rap at the door.

"Great heavens!" he thought, staring aghast at her, eyeing her not uncomely form, "can Frank be mad enough to care to desperation for such a being as this—to be ready to accept ruin itself rather than give her up?"

Mrs. Merriton was at home, and he was invited into the neat, faultlessly clean parlour. A delicious scent of roses filled the whole house with perfume. The old lady was a tall, stately personage, pale and interesting, occupied in knitting some white fleecy wrap. She rose with the dignity of a queen when the strange gentleman appeared, stooping his head as he entered. Mr. Clinton was ready with an excuse for this visit.

"He understood that she wished to part with some of her small houses at Crowhurst, and a friend of his was desirous of purchasing them."

Mrs. Merriton was surprised, but the excuse seemed a plausible one, and nobody could be more agreeable than Mr. Clinton when he chose. By degrees the conversation glided into pleasant channels, and the old lady felt as if she had gained a new friend.

Mr. Clinton carefully avoided mentioning the real object of his visit, but managed to discover that he knew some friend of Mrs. Merriton's, whose name served as a legitimate introduction. Then he went away, Mrs. Merriton herself

attending him to the door, although she was slightly lame, and might readily have excused herself from showing so much courtesy.

The stately presence of this dignified old lady changed the aspect of this little dwelling in Mr. Clinton's eyes. As he closed the small gate he involuntarily raised his hat to Mrs. Merriton, who smiled and curtsied in an old-fashioned way.

"I could almost have forgiven Master Frank if he had fallen in love with the grandmother," said Mr. Clinton to himself. "But the girl—the fellow must be mad. The girl is a perfect horror. If she had twenty thousand pounds as her dowry she would still be unendurable. And the girl I found for him is handsome, clever, rich and has a train of influential relatives at her beck and call."

A short distance from the house he unexpectedly met the fair, graceful creature who had so strangely brought back the image of his early love—the girl who haunted his thoughts, his dreams. She was advancing slowly towards him under overarching leaves, down a narrow, picturesque lane.

Her marvellous resemblance to his false love had never been so strikingly marked as at that moment. His memory rushed back to a day like this, when he had met that faithless love in a pretty country lane far away. Twenty years melted away, and he advanced to meet Jannette as if he moved in a dream.

Drawn towards her by some unexplainable mesmeric influence, he looked at Jannette so steadfastly, so earnestly, that the ready roses flew to her face. He addressed her as if he had known her for any length of time, and she, unaware of his identity, though acquainted with him from what seemed accidental meetings, and bound by courtesy to answer, timidly replied.

Those innocent blue eyes, unwitting of harm or guile, clear and open as those of a child, with a pathetic, appealing expression in their translucent depths, were raised with angelic confidence to meet his gaze. Philip Clinton's frozen heart melted in the soft sunshine of the rays beaming from an unsullied soul.

No longer did he argue with himself against what he had regarded as boyish folly. Unhappily, like a child, joyously building a house of gaily-painted cards, he began to plan out a future life for himself. With the unreasonable want of forethought so often observable in these under the influence of the master passion, he never paused to ask himself if there might already exist some favoured lover, or if it were possible this girl might have given her troth. For the next few days he watched anxiously for her, but failed to see anything of the light fitting figure, the half sad, half smiling face, the lovely, luminous eyes, that distracted his thoughts.

By accident, Jannette had altered her customary walk. To her restless, worried heart the old familiar places were losing their pleasant charm. Every spot heretofore so dear was already haunted by a shadow of cold, indefinable fear. Instead of walking towards the West Hill, she diverted her rambles to the East Cliff, ignorant that she thus withdrew the sunshine from another's daily life.

Even while thus absorbed by the enthralling interest which had sprung up to allure him, Philip Clinton did not forget his nephew's affairs. Each day he made some excuse to visit Mrs. Merriton, viewing with increased aversion the stout, hearty young woman with the rough voice and bad grammar who opened the door.

By degrees he approached the subject of Frank, and by degrees succeeded in imbuing Mrs. Merriton with the conviction that it would be her duty to prevent any marriage between Frank Ireton and her granddaughter. He sedulously concealed his own relationship to the young man, however, representing himself as merely "an old friend of the family."

The idea of Frank's marrying Miss Verity had been bad enough before, but now that he believed he knew what species of girl she was, it had become perfectly abhorrent to him. The account of Frank's condition, sent by the doctor,

grew more grave day by day. Symptoms of fever had set in. The doctor said the young man was suffering from some mental anxiety which he would not reveal, but which retarded his recovery.

Mr. Clinton felt irritated and worried. Two powerful currents of feeling drove him in two diametrically opposite directions. He wished to go to his nephew, and, when the young man was better, to carry him off to the East, to Spain, anywhere to save him from a lingering illness, and from his detestable engagement. But he could not endure to quit the place haunted by the beautiful girl who had become queen of his heart.

Pondering over these broken threads of fate, trying in vain to disentangle them, he walked out, along by the West Hill. The solitude was singularly profound. Not a human being, scarcely a passing sea-bird, was in sight. The solemn lap lap of the golden-tinted waves alone broke the unusual silence.

Philip Clinton sat down on the fallen trunk of a tree, painfully pre-occupied; his mind distracted with sweet and bitter thoughts. Lying almost at his feet he noticed a small book, which he picked up. It was a well-read copy of Scott's poetical works, bound in gay colours, as if meant for a gift-book. For a moment, a thrill ran through his heart. Once he had bought just such a volume as this to give to his first love. With some reluctance he opened it.

On the fly-leaf was written in pencil "Jannette Verity." The idea of stout Miss Verity, of the ruddy cheeks and vacant eyes, owning Scott's poems, and leaving her book by the roadside, was so droll that Mr. Clinton laughed aloud. He made the discovery a fresh excuse for calling at the cottage. Mrs. Merriton happened to be in the little garden as he approached, and he at once gave her the book.

"It is my granddaughter's book," said the old lady. "It belonged to her poor mother. I cannot imagine how she can have been so careless as to lose it. She will be very pleased when she knows you have found it. It is strange she has never happened to see you, Mr. Clinton, but it has always happened that she has been out when you have called."

Mr. Clinton looked at her, astonished by these words. His impression had been that the proud old lady was ashamed of her plebeian grandchild, and had preferred to ignore her, as more fit for the kitchen than the parlour. As he so cordially disliked the young woman he had never attempted to encourage an acquaintance.

"Are you not in error, do I comprehend you?" he began.

But Mrs. Merriton did not catch his words. She cried:

"Here is my granddaughter, sir. Let her thank you herself."

And as she spoke Jannette opened the gate. Mr. Clinton turned hastily as the latch clicked.

"Is this young lady your granddaughter?" he stammered, "I thought—"

But what he thought he happily left unuttered, nor did Mrs. Merriton ever know that the young woman who "came in to help" in the domestic work had been mistaken for her peerless Jannette. Mr. Clinton accepted the invitation to enter the cottage, for he was resolved to unravel the mystery of Jannette's singular resemblance to his lost love, and eagerly desirous of gaining further acquaintance.

Jannette left him for some minutes alone with her grandmother, when he took the opportunity of asking Mrs. Merriton some direct questions. He began by a few discreetly worded inquiries about the young girl's mother, whom he said he fancied he had known, but could hardly remember if her name was really Verity.

"My daughter's maiden name was Allanson—Ada Allanson," said Mrs. Merriton.

But to her dismay Mr. Clinton started up wildly, and paced to and fro excitedly. It was enough. This girl was the daughter of the

woman whom he had loved, not wisely, but too well, in the past. Becoming calmer, he explained to the old lady why he felt so painful an interest in her revelation. Mrs. Merriton had never seen him in the olden days, for it was during a visit to a friend that Ada had met him and accepted his offers of marriage, writing to inform her mother of every detail.

It was just before going to visit her mother that Philip had been so cruelly jilted. The man for whom Ada had so heartlessly thrown him aside had squandered a fortune and died, leaving her penniless.

She had then married Mr. Verity, thus changing her name. Her mother married again about the same time, and thus the chance of identifying her by a familiar name was lost. Jannette's return ended the confidential conversation. The poor girl was like some drooping lily, but looked more pathetically lovely than when in the bloom of health and happiness.

Philip Clinton readily stayed to share the frugal little meal laid for the evening. If possible, he was more madly in love with the girl than he had been before. Even the knowledge that she was the promised wife of his nephew did not deter him from the resolve to gain her for himself.

"It is only a boy and girl affair," he thought. "They will forget."

And he did not choose to remember that just such another traitor as he was seeking to become had blighted his own life. The crust of cold years was broken, and his heart was young again. He visited the cottage every day; he gained the full approval of Mrs. Merriton, and tried to load both Jannette and her grandmother with costly gifts; but it was in vain that he pressed an ardent suit on the girl.

Poor Jannette had ceased to write to Frank, only waiting with dull despair for a sign from him. No sign came. No matter, she said to herself. She loved the memory of those old days (only a few weeks old) better than the kindest affection anyone else could give her.

"He must be ill," she whispered to herself, "or there is some good reason why he does not write. I will never believe he is untrue to me."

The only favour she would consent to accept from her new suitor was the occasional loan of books. Flowers, fruit, and other offerings she steadily refused.

CHAPTER V.

"He must be ill," Jannette kept repeating to herself, sitting on the edge of a rock, Frank's first letter in her hands. She had been weeping bitterly, and sat in a listless attitude of despair. Hope seemed dying.

"It pains me to see you look so sad, my child," said a soft, kindly voice, so close that she started, with a cry—with something of the feeling that leads a lost child to retreat, yet hold out its hands trustfully to the first tones that ring of sympathy. Jannette looked up. She had felt so utterly alone in the world. An awful silence lay between herself and her absent love like a sharp sword. Her grandmother was kind, but the old forget as surely the warm feelings of their youth, as ardent youth forgets the days of childhood. The echo of this kind voice was like dew to the parched flowers.

Philip Clinton had been watching her for some time. As the blue eyes, swimming in tears, turned to him, he crept nearer, and gently took one of her white hands—the pretty hand in the lace mittens, which Frank had so often kissed, with leave and without leave, with reason and without reason.

"You are unhappy," the soft voice went on. "Tell me. Can you trust me?"

Jannette snatched away her hand, hurriedly folded up Frank's letter, and placed the thin sheets, half crushed, in a velvet pocket hanging by her side. She did not know that Mr. Clinton was in any way aware of the existence of Frank, for Mrs. Merriton had never spoken of the little confidences reposed in her by her portly visitor. Mrs. Merriton was one of the people who

imagine they must be wise because they are old. She was very kind, but she might have sympathised as much with the veriest stranger as with the only daughter of her own only child.

At that moment Philip Clinton seemed the one only friend left in all the world to Jannette. But friendship and love are as antagonistic as fire and water. Mr. Clinton saw only the tears, the girlish shrinking, the varying colour on the face that might have haunted a poet's dream.

"It is only a boy and girl affair," he kept repeating to himself.

With affected sympathy, by slow degrees, he drew the details of her sad story from the young girl. It seemed so terrible to her; nobody could ever have suffered such agonising despair before. He managed to regain the little hand so rudely snatched away; he gained the other, and then tenderly kissed both. The sun was shining, the slow, slumberous sea was rolling lazily to and fro, the lovely azure sky above breathed of peace—of love. It was a day to remember, and a day to forget.

"Come to me," whispered Philip Clinton. "I will surround you with luxury. With me you shall reign as a queen. Spurn those who trifle with you. I will shield you from all care. You will have but to breathe a wish, and it shall be fulfilled in a moment."

The absent, say the proverb, are always in the wrong. For a few brief instants, pride, love, resentment, ambition, mortification, ranged themselves against an absent lover. Jannette's hands, clasped by the eager suitor who pleaded his cause, trembled. Then, as the needle surely turns to the magnet, her woman's nature rose in defiance of the tempter.

"If I cannot marry my own true love," she said, a tremulous smile rippling over her pale lips, "I will never marry at all. I must go home quickly. You are very kind, sir. My dear love is not faithless. I love him, and him alone. It would be wrong to say I could return the love you say you bear for me, while my heart is full of another."

They both stood up. But Philip Clinton saw with alarm that the tide had risen while they had been absorbed in this painful, bitter-sweet conversation. Jannette, startled by his glance, looked at the waters. It was but too evident. She shrank back, terrified, the water surrounded them.

"Oh, it is dreadful," she cried. "Can we escape?"

Philip Clinton set his teeth. He could not answer. Every moment the waters rose higher, already it was splashing about their feet. With a desperate fear, he glanced about. Jannette stood calm and firm; her face was ashy white, but she uttered no cry, no moan. As they stood thus, every instant seeming an hour, a sharp, rapid barking sounded a little way above them, and Jasper, Mr. Clinton's big retriever, appeared, eager, panting, his red tongue lolling up. The intelligent brute ran down as his master whistled.

His feet splashed in the water as he descended, and he looked anxiously at his master, as he half walked, half swam towards him, breasting the waves. The natural terror of facing death had already partly overcome Jannette's courage. She was clinging to Philip Clinton's arm, gazing affrightedly at the sullen, roaring waves. Unhappily, Mr. Clinton was a bad swimmer. It would be a question if he could save himself, to try to help another would mean certain death for both.

He flung off his coat, and rapidly divested himself of his boots, then spoke a few words to Jasper, and made some signs. The splendid creature listened with almost human intelligence. Mr. Clinton quickly implored Jannette to trust herself to him, and in a few moments Jasper was swimming to shore, dragging the almost insensible girl with him. No human being could have returned the way the dog had descended.

With difficulty Philip Clinton swam to shore. He found Jannette lying in a dead faint, Jasper standing by her, occasionally shaking the wet from his glossy coat. Mr. Clinton shouted for

help, and his sonorous voice brought two stalwart young fishermen to the spot.

They stared aghast at the beautiful girl lying on the strand, but Mr. Clinton quickly explained matters, and they lifted her as if she had been a child, and carried her to their little cottage, which lay under a jutting piece of rock. The wife of one young fellow met the party at the door.

At a glance she saw what had happened, and without a useless waste of words, led the way to a neat bedchamber, where the still insensible Jannette was laid. The young fisherwoman's ready skill soon brought Jannette to her senses. One of the men was sent by Mr. Clinton to Pelham Crescent, for that gentleman's carriage, a coat and other necessities.

The other man went to tell Mrs. Merriton what had occurred. The stout servant belonging to the old lady speedily brought a change of garments, and Mr. Clinton's carriage soon came. Mr. Clinton bestowed a handsome gift on the honest fisher people who had come to the rescue at the last moment. He then took Jannette to her home in his carriage.

All hope of winning her love had vanished, but he profoundly revered the girl who had resisted temptation, who had bravely refused to give up her true love for the most alluring future. As he placed her in the arms of her terrified grandmother, who came to the door of the cottage to meet them, he kissed her pretty, trembling fingers, and took what was almost a farewell look at her pale face.

"It has been a terrible day," he said to Mrs. Merriton. "I trust the poor child will not be ill in consequence of the shock."

Jannette did not fall ill. She was obliged to stay at home for a few days, being in a low, nervous state, but after that she wandered about much as before. It seemed to her as if she moved in a dream. No longer did she try to reason about Frank's strange silence. Sometimes she regretted, with wild despair, that Mr. Clinton had succeeded in rescuing her from death.

When she encountered Philip Clinton, she no longer regarded him with a pathetic smile, but with eyes downcast. She appeared frozen like a beautiful statue. He ceased to make any attempt to urge what was a useless suit, although he still visited her grandmother, and gave her presents of fruit and flowers.

Every day, poor Jannette grew paler and thinner. She tried to brace herself up, but despair was eating into her heart. With noble trust, she did not believe her lover false. Something must have happened. But what had happened?

CHAPTER VI.

In his sad exile, Frank was but the ghost of his former self. The worry and anxiety he had suffered had, so the doctor feared, induced a low fever.

At length his state became so serious that it was considered necessary to ask his uncle to come. That gentleman obeyed the second summons with a guilty, troubled conscience. He travelled with all speed until he reached the bedside of the poor young fellow whom he had already wronged.

By the time Mr. Clinton arrived Frank was delirious. As he sat by him holding the burning fingers within his own trembling hand, Philip Clinton almost wept tears of remorse and mortification. His dead sister seemed to ask how he had guarded her boy. As Frank tossed from side to side, only one name was on his lips—"Jannette!"

Each time he uttered a wailing cry for her his voice vibrated through his uncle's heart. A terrible fight for good or for evil was fought out in Philip Clinton's soul. But in the end his better angel triumphed.

"Who is it he so constantly asks for?" inquired the physician, though he very shrewdly guessed, and indeed had clearly divined the cause of his patient's constant agitation of mind. "I think if it were possible she could

come hither, her presence might have a wonderful effect in calming him."

Mr. Clinton resolved to make a grand sacrifice in atonement for his late treachery. He telegraphed to Mrs. Merriton, asking her to let Jannette come, to be attended by his housekeeper.

Mrs. Merriton at once consented. The message was to poor Jannette like one brought by an angel. She had so confidently believed Frank was ill, that the news did not surprise or alarm her. Mrs. Roberts, the housekeeper, happened to have guessed the little love story, having many times seen the lovers walking together in the lanes and on the beach, so she was not surprised by her commission.

The day when Jannette arrived and stood in the sick-room, Frank was beginning to recover his senses. The first object he beheld, faintly calling her name, and languidly opening his eyes, was his beloved.

"You must be quite calm, and not allow Frank to excite himself, or the doctor says he must banish you," said Mr. Clinton.

Jannette leaned over her lover and kissed his pale lips. Tranquilised, he smiled, and almost immediately fell into a slumber. From that hour he rapidly began to rally his wasted forces, and soon was able to get about, aided by Jannette and his penitent uncle. Philip Clinton felt he could not long endure this daily companionship with the beautiful young girl.

"When you are well and strong," he said to Frank, "you shall marry Miss Verity. I no longer oppose the marriage as your heart is so steadily fixed upon it."

Thus bribed, Frank rapidly regained health and strength. His uncle bought a junior partnership for him in the house at Berlin, and before the end of the year the wedding was to take place. In the meantime they returned to Hastings for a few months.

By a few judiciously worded remarks Mr. Clinton explained away the effect of the words he had spoken to Mrs. Merriton regarding Frank, and readily regained her lost favour for him. He saw very little of either the old lady or her granddaughter during those slowly dragging months. Had he been able to do so he would have left England at once, but he felt he could not leave his poor nephew even to such pleasant companionship.

The wedding, a very quiet one, once over, he quitted home for a long straggling visit to Spain and to the East. He had to fight a hard battle against his own heart, and the sad yearnings which clung about him. But in the end the good fight was won. He became tranquil, his old self conquered.

And at last he by what people call chance won the love of a beautiful Spanish girl. For her he could never feel the deep, strange passion that had twice promised to make life a delicious romance, but she brightened his home. Calm content rewarded him, and banished the cankering bitterness which had once filled his heart and blinded his eyes.

Mrs. Ireton never betrayed the secret of his suit, even in her most confidential talks with her husband. Frank never knew why his uncle so suddenly withdrew all opposition to the marriage once so abhorrent. But when a man is perfectly happy he is apt not to trouble himself about whys and wherefores. N.

ARTISTIC HOMES.

We have received "Artistic Homes, or How to Furnish with Taste." The object of the author—to supply in a succinct and readable form, useful hints as to the tasteful furnishing of the homes of our middle class—has been cleverly achieved. Has the author seen that most perfect conception and realisation of a home of taste at No. 9, Melbury-road, W., where Mr. William Burges has carried out with transcendently good effect his own ideas of what an artistic and domestic residence should be? It is a liberal education to an art student to walk

through his rooms. The guest chamber, or golden room, looks like a bit out of the Arabian Nights Entertainments with its golden washing-stand and toilet-table enriched with crystals, gems, and the shells known as Venus's ears. There is nothing more exquisitely beautiful to be seen in London than the art of this matchless house.

The author evidently understands the principles of true taste, and in consecutive chapters treats exhaustively and comprehensively of primary and secondary colours, the effect upon the eye, simultaneous contrast, juxtaposition, and proportions of colours, decorations of walls and ceilings, wainscoting, paperhangings and their designs, the ceiling, floor coverings, carpets opaque windows, blinds, curtains, gas-fittings, lamps, furniture and its arrangement in the several rooms, pictures, window and garden boxes, and floral decorations. Decorative glass, china, and electro-plate are also touched upon. —Published by Ward, Lock & Co. Price 1s.

ONLY A PENNY.

THE following anecdote illustrates how money by changing hands accomplishes so much: A singular financial transaction occurred lately in an office. By some means or other it happened that the office boy owed one of the clerks three-pence, the clerk owed the cashier twopence, and the cashier owed the office boy twopence. One day last week the office boy, having a penny in his pocket, concluded to diminish his debt, and therefore handed it over to the clerk, who, in turn, paid half of his debt by giving it to the cashier. The latter handed it back to the boy, saying that he only owed him one penny. The office boy again passed the penny to the clerk, who passed it to the cashier, who passed it back to the boy, and the boy discharged his entire debt by handing it to the clerk, thereby squaring all accounts. Thus it may be seen how great is the benefit to be derived from a single penny.

TIME'S REVENGE;

OR,

FOILED AT THE LAST.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

REAPING THE HARVEST.

"It is hard for Lady Allenby," said Beattie, with some emotion, her beautiful dark eyes full of a strange mingling of compassion and laughter. "Could I not spare her something, if, as you say, I am owner of thousands and thousands a year? After all—"

"My dear Miss Allenby," Mr. Fielding replied, "it is useless to ask me. Neither you nor I can do anything. Neither you nor I have the slightest control over all this money. It is idle to talk about it. If you wish Lady Allenby to live with you—" Beattie drew back, shudderingly, a cloud of displeasure passing over her face. "My dear, you will not be compelled to do anything you do not like. I don't suppose there is another young lady of your age and station in the three kingdoms so untrammelled. You can do as you please, go where you please, live where you like—"

"It seems amazing," said Beattie. Then a vivid blush rose on her face. "I ought to tell you, sir, that I—I have—"

"Engaged yourself, eh?" said Mr. Fielding, seeing that she was unable to proceed. "Well, I hardly know what to say to that. It is early days, when your father has not been dead a fortnight."

"Perhaps it was very foolish—or very wrong," stammered the young girl. "But it happened all in a minute—"

"Ah, but, dear child, these things should be calmly considered," said the old gentleman. "You ought to have consulted your friends—you ought—"

"The few friends I have would be delighted to know," cried Beattie. "I have only three friends in all the world, without counting him, you know—"

"Only three friends?"

"My aunt, Miss Ibbotson, you know—and she will be married in a week or two, and go away—and my cousin, Miss Lascelles, and Miss Rochester—I count her as a friend."

"Tell me the name of—"

"Mr. Darvill—Percy Darvill," said Beattie, the flush coming to her cheeks again.

"Darvill—Darvill. I do not know him. But, my dear, you will be obliged to ask the Lord Chancellor's permission to marry. Of course you cannot marry for about a year, in any case, in respect to your father's memory."

"I know. But what do you mean by asking leave of the Lord Chancellor? I don't understand."

"Probably not. But allow me to remind you that you are a young lady of property, and people are obliged to look after you and your interests. I think I must interview this Mr. Darvill. How long have you been engaged?"

Beattie twisted a diamond ring round on her "engaged" finger.

"Three days," she said.

"Um. I trust this gentleman is not mercenary in his views?"

"Mr. Fielding!" angrily flashed Miss Allenby.

"Ah, my dear child, it is all very well—but young ladies in love are apt to see things through rose-coloured spectacles. How long have you known this gentleman?"

"Always. At least, as long as I can remember."

"Ah—um. Did your aunt know there was any little feeling of affection, or—"

"She liked him very much, and I am sure she will be very much pleased to know I am engaged to him."

"Ah, well, that is something. When and where could I see him? Does he live in London or in the country? Who and what is he? I am afraid this little affair has been rather rashly entered on. But we shall see—we shall see. I am compelled to return to London immediately, but shall return in a day or two. Come, you have not answered my questions."

Beattie rapidly gave him a glowing account of Percy, to which he quietly listened, with a smile. Then, without making any comment, he asked:

"And what do you wish to do now? Will you stay here, or—say what you wish."

"Will Lady Allenby stay here?" asked Beattie.

"She will remain as long as there is any real necessity for her to do so," replied Mr. Fielding. "No doubt she will make up her mind in a few weeks what course she will adopt."

"May I go to Miss Rochester's house?" timidly asked Miss Allenby.

"Certainly, if you wish it. If you should desire to know anything, or need any information, write or telegraph to me. Here is my address in London," Mr. Fielding said, giving her a card. "You can draw on me for any money you require."

"If I want to give any money to anyone may I have it?" inquired Beattie.

"To whom would you wish to give money, and what would be the probable amount you would require?" suspiciously asked Mr. Fielding.

"My cousin Fay—Miss Lascelles is—is I believe, very poor—I mean—"

"I do not like you to give money, but, however, you can do as you please, so long as you exercise a due moderation. Would twenty pounds be enough?"

"Oh, yes," joyfully cried Beattie, who had never possessed a fifth part of the sum in her life. "If she would come, might I ask her to pay me a visit?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, I forgot; I have already asked her to come, and to go with me and Miss Rochester to Italy," rather confusedly said Beattie. "But I did not know then that I must not do anything without asking leave, and Miss Rochester said it was right, so—"

"Very well. But I should like to know something of this young lady."

"Oh, Fayette! Why, Fayette is a hundred times better than I am, and twice as nice-looking, and so good and kind. I never saw Fayette out of temper, and—"

"Ha, ha. I shall be obliged to lock up those rose-coloured spectacles of yours," said the old gentleman, smiling. "Here are bank-notes to the amount of one hundred pounds. Now, do not be extravagant, and if anybody asks you for anything send them to me."

He pressed her little hands with fatherly kindness, and went away. Beattie flew to seek Miss Rochester, who was waiting for her in the sun-lighted garden. Already Beattie was almost as fond of Miss Rochester as she had been of Fayette, and confided in her with the simplicity of a child.

Lady Allenby listened with sullen displeasure when the girls waited on her to tell her they wished to depart for a while from Altenham. Disappointed in her schemes regarding Miss Rochester, she was almost as insulting to her as she had been to Beattie.

"Do as you please," she frigidly answered.

Her ladyship was very angry when Eric carelessly informed her he was going to run up to London for a couple of days.

"What do you want there?" she crossly inquired.

"Important business," he lightly answered, "or perhaps idle pleasure, or perhaps both combined. Perhaps I want to study fossils at the British Museum or monkeys at the Zoo, or—"

"It is useless to ask you questions," said Lady Allenby, angrily. "I am left alone in my grief, my desolation."

Eric detested the little affectations and absurdities of his mother, and never took the trouble to conceal this aversion. No one was more susceptible to real suffering—perhaps no one was more intolerant of shame.

Even to himself Eric did not care to acknowledge that he was going to seek the one fair face which drew him with the irresistible force of a magnet. He did not choose to give his lady mother the slightest hint of his reasons for going off in this half-mysterious way. So when she drew out her black-edged cambric handkerchief, and shook it ostentatiously preparatory to wiping away the tears of wounded affection, he muttered a nearly audible "Pooh!"

"Be comforted, mia madre," said he. "If I go it is only that I may come back again. I should only worry and bother you if I stayed all the time."

The dinner that evening was naturally a sad and gloomy scene. Miss Rochester stayed, being earnestly persuaded to do so by Beattie; and now that it was profitless, Eric paid court to her in a fashion that irritated Sir Gerald, and faintly raised his mother's hopes.

"For," she considered, "one never knows what may happen. When I came first I made sure she was in love with Gerald."

The next day Beattie departed with Miss Rochester. She wrote a long letter to Fayette, telling her of her engagement to Percy, enclosing five pounds, and asking her to obtain leave of absence, if it were only for a week. "But," she added, "I shall come and run away with you if you do not come to me." This letter she sent to the house from which Fayette had fled. Eric also departed. Little did the poor fellow know that tricky Master Cupid, who laughs at other mortals besides locksmiths, was leading him on a wild-goose chase.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SEALED BY A KISS.

SIR GERALD ALLENBY turned over every imaginable scheme in his mind. In his darker

moods even the terrible thought of attempting Beattie's life pressed on him like some dangerous, twisting serpent. But he had neither courage nor ingenuity sufficient to enable him to carry such a plot into execution.

If he could have safely poisoned, stabbed, or smothered her he would have done it, although with shrinking fear and unutterable loathing. But he not only dreaded probable punishment; he also lacked the cunning, the evil cleverness, which arranges every criminal detail with wicked calculation.

He knew it would be perfectly useless to ask Beattie for anything. Even supposing he could win back the friendly feeling, the girlish affection she had so frankly displayed, it was not in her power to give, hardly to promise anything with regard to her newly-acquired inheritance. For many reasons he regretted not having secured her affection.

Hour by hour the temptation to agree to Mrs. Lascelles' proposition grew stronger. In vain he struggled against it. Crying within his heart "I'll ne'er consent," every effort he made to push aside the lure only enmeshed him more inextricably.

As yet he was ignorant that Beattie had accepted Percy Darvill as her betrothed lover. Acting on Jessie Rochester's advice, Beattie had not told Lady Allenby of the important step she had taken.

"She is a horrid old thing," Miss Rochester had declared, "and will be sure to make mischief. I'm awfully fond of Percy, and I'm still more awfully fond of you, Bess, my dear, and I wouldn't have anything happen to mar the course of your true love for the world. Something's sure to happen; it always does, but we won't have extra mischief-making. It's not as if she were your own mother, you know; and I believe the proper etiquette is for Mr. Darvill to mention the matter himself. I've got a battered old Etiquette of Courtship and Marriage somewhere at home—we'll look directly we get there, and see what's the properest thing to be done on the occasion."

Sir Gerald did not, could not, believe that all hopes of winning Jessie Rochester were at an end. Without being what is ordinarily recognised as a vain or conceited man, he had a quiet, deep-seated belief in his own powers of attraction. Many times he had succeeded in winning girlish hearts, without trouble, therefore he could not be persuaded that it would be impossible to succeed now.

He did not believe that absence makes the heart grow fonder. He hoped that Miss Rochester might prove as fickle as the rest of womankind. But he cursed the fate which had snatched away Altenham when it had seemed within his grasp. Rich, he might have tempted Jessie from her absent lover; poor, the siege would be a doubtful one.

Slowly revolving painful, agitating thoughts, he rambled away from Altenham the day after the two girls had gone. Being light and alert, he was addicted to long walks. He had, too, a curious sensuous love for nature, and was no mean hand at sketching.

The air was pleasantly exhilarating. Half unconsciously, he followed the way leading to the Rochester's place. With a yearning he had never known till now, he longed for a glance even at the only woman he had ever loved, and he fancied some accident might favour him.

As he entered a shaded lane, where the trees arched and intertwined overhead, the sound of horses' feet struck on his ear. In his present nervous state—a state well described by the popular and expressive word "unhinged"—every sound, every echo of a sound, jarred upon him with a painful force.

This man was not worth studying, any more than a noxious snake or insect is worth the well-conducted, clever, serene professor's notice; yet, at this moment, angels might have wept over a human soul in peril.

With the guilty self-consciousness of one already steeped in sin, stained with crime, looking with half-dazed eyes at the hot fires of

greater crimes and sins, Sir Gerald crept behind the bole of a great tree.

Friend or foe, he cared to meet no one now. A throbbing pain in his forehead brought to his mind, by some unpleasant train of ideas, the brand set upon Cain. He felt as if the most casual passer-by must see his thoughts.

A silvery echo of laughter, the laughter of a girl perfectly happy; oh, rare and lovely vision! filled the summer air with a delicious sweetness. In a moment, Beattie, mounted on a pretty, graceful little mare, accompanied by Percy Darvill, also on horseback, appeared in sight.

Percy Darvill's strong, firm hand was lightly laid on the rein timidly held by Beattie. Never had either of the young lovers appeared to such advantage. They were all aglow with innocent happiness.

Like most lovers, they fancied themselves alone in the world. The universe seemed created for them alone. Like the famous chancellors who imagined the sun rose every morning for the express purpose of hearing him crow, they took it for granted that nature smiled to heighten their bliss. Or, rather, they were like children, who accept benefits heaped upon them with eager, laughing glee, unconscious that any gratitude is expected.

Sir Gerald saw the state of affairs in a moment. If not already engaged, these young people were on the point of plighting their troth. He watched, unseen, the bitterest hatred, the most cankering venom, in his heart. A happy ring of laughter, a confused murmur of voices, a pause. Then Percy bent downwards, and Sir Gerald caught the words:

"When we are married you know, darling—"

And the words had scarcely been spoken, when Percy suddenly caught Miss Allenby in his arms, and kissed her with a long, lingering, passionate kiss, which told the story of a happy love more plainly than the most eloquent sentences could have narrated it.

"I'm sure I shall tumble off," cried Beattie, glowing like a rose after a summer shower.

Percy laughed. The two rode on, sublimely unconscious, as lovers always are, that anybody had witnessed this little interlude. The circle of love already surrounded the young girl like a magic ring of fire.

Sir Gerald shrank yet further into concealment. It is an unprofitable task to follow evil doers through the labyrinths of their devious thoughts. Yet nothing can be more terrible to those who pause for a moment in the modern whirl of events than to glance for an instant at the brief paragraphs in the mirrored frames of life.

Most readers look carelessly, if they look at all, through the "headings," as they are technically called. Few linger to think of each stained soul named. And well that they do not turn to gaze at the evil doers.

"What does it matter?" said Sir Gerald, as he retraced his steps to Altenham. "After all, revenge is sweet. As she said, I have a moral, if not legal, hold upon her. I don't think I risk very much, and I may gain—what? Well, I can name my own terms."

Instead of going direct to Altenham, Sir Gerald went to the town and sent a telegram to Mrs. Lascelles.

"Going to Scotland. Will write in a few days."

That was all.

"But, after all," he thought, struggling against his better nature, "it means nothing, it binds me to nothing."

MR. ARUNDELL was sorely puzzled. In a moment, as it were, he found himself the centre of a painful romance. Probably no middle-aged gentleman was ever more calmly prosaic than Mr. Arundell. "Regular as clockwork" is a truth spoken in jest.

Anyone acquainted with Mr. Arundell might have been almost certain of his movements at different hours of the day. He greatly disliked

being driven out of his ordinary routine. But he was singularly unselfish and ready with a grumble and a growl to sacrifice his ease, his comfort, and his money for the benefit of other people.

With almost feverish anxiety he awaited Fayette in his dim dusty office. He had found that Miss Ibbotson had left London and travelled to Scotland, and he thought the safest course would be to take the young girl to her at once.

On her way Fayette had braced up her nerves to bear any tidings, good or ill, to be ready for any journey. But she was giddy with excitement as she stepped from the cab into the dark, dusty house of business. Elizabeth was ready for any new adventures. It was "hall as good as a play," she thought. Her strong, stout arm was very useful to the half-frightened girl she helped in alighting.

Mr. Arundell hurried Fayette into his own room, dismissed the cab, and signed to Elizabeth to follow him. All "them himperent fellars," the clerks, had gone.

"How much would you take, my good girl," he said, "to throw up your situation without warning and go with this young lady to Scotland?"

Elizabeth loosened the floodgates of her eloquence so alarmingly that Mr. Arundell almost put his fingers in his ears. Then he laughed and told her to wait. He went to Fayette, and told her that her aunt was in Scotland.

"Are you equal to undertaking the journey now?" he asked.

Unable to speak, she eagerly rose and held out her little hand.

"Come," said Mr. Arundell.

He touched his handbell, a signal to his man to bring a cab. In a few minutes he was taking Fayette and her new attendant to Euston Square. On the way he had the care to stop and buy a fur-lined cloak, and a few other necessary things for the young girl who had escaped unprovided.

"I have nothing to tell you," he said, as they drove on. "I will myself go and see this mother superior. She has said nothing beyond the mere fact that she holds a confession of the date and of the nature supposed."

Fayette was too weary to think. She resigned herself to the inevitable. The journey to Scotland was like a dream. Her powers, mental and physical, were becoming exhausted; she was becoming almost like an automaton. It was like some electric shock when as she waited in a petty little station for Mr. Arundell at the end of the journey he came to her, Aunt Prue's telegram in his hand, looking very white and worried.

"My dear," said he, "do not be alarmed, but I find I have made a serious mistake. There are two towns in this part of the country; their names are almost alike, but they are thirty miles apart. You are quite safe. I am going to find some place where we can have some breakfast, and then I must make inquiries as to the best means of reaching the place where your aunt is staying."

In about half-an-hour he came back, and signed to Fayette and her humble friend to follow him. He led the way to a pretty little village inn. A pleasant, smiling old landlady met them at the door, and took charge of the two tired girls. Presently Fayette, refreshed by splashing her face and hands in cold water, was sitting at breakfast with Mr. Arundell, Elizabeth being duly cared for in the kitchen.

"I will leave you here," said the old gentleman, "while I make inquiries. Do not be uneasy. You are quite safe."

"You are so very, very kind," murmured Fayette, the tears rising in her blue eyes.

The methodical old gentleman was ashamed of the error, although it had arisen through no fault of his own. He went away hurriedly, promising to come back as soon as possible. Fayette pressed her fingers on her aching eyelids trying to think. But a dull, aching pain in her temples warned her to desist. She rose, and idly walked to the window with languid curiosity.

A lovely scene lay without—one of those superb pictures which need the pen of a Scott or a Wordsworth to depict. A glorious morning sunlight illumined lofty mountains and green sloping vales; the fresh fragrance of the early morning rose like a solemn thanksgiving. But as Fayette looked a solitary figure slowly advanced up one of the shadowed glens and absorbed all her interest. In a moment she recognised the graceful figure and handsome face of Gerald Allenby.

A sudden feeling of joy impelled Fayette to run to meet him. It seemed as if another friend had come to her aid. For a few moments she watched as he slowly walked up the path. His head was bent down, almost touching his breast. Fayette thought he must be coming to seek her to take her to Beattie.

She was becoming so unaccustomed to surprises that nothing seemed improbable. In her present bewildered state she was hardly capable of calmly reasoning. But she fancied that perhaps he had been directed to come to this place by Mr. Arundell.

A thrill of joyous anticipation led her to imagine that Eric Armitage might be following with her old friend. From the upper window where she stood, Fayette could see Sir Gerald enter the house. The minutes wore away, but no one came to summon her.

A silence as if death reigned. Fayette moved towards the door, then softly stepped out into the narrow corridor, but still could hear no sound. The corridor was a kind of antiquated gallery, from whence could be seen what was called the coffee room.

The brilliant morning light fully illumined this chamber, while the gallery above was dark. Those above could see clearly, but no one downstairs could discern any object in the gallery without painfully straining their eyes. Sir Gerald was standing by a quaint old sideboard, leaning his elbow on this while he slowly and carefully turned over the pages of a shabby-looking book.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

"SEMIRAMIDE" has been performed for the first time this season, the chief attraction being the appearance of Madame Patti, whose greatest triumph as a vocalist is gained in "Semiramide." The great artist was, vocally and dramatically, as good as ever. With regard to the performance generally the least said the better.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

An attractive and interesting performance of "Mignon" has been produced here, and was a great success. Madame Christine Nilsson took the title character, and her achievement called for nothing but praise. She sang in her very best style, and was liberally applauded. Madlle. Lehmann was an attractive Filma, her bright soprano voice, used with taste and skill, making the music always acceptable. Signor Campanini was heard to advantage as Guglielmo.

ROYAL AQUARIUM.

There are now on exhibition in the Annex of the Royal Aquarium two enormous giants and a very small Chinese dwarf. The following is a description of these interesting people:—Chang, the great Chinese giant, is the largest giant in existence. He stands eight feet two inches high, and is highly educated, speaking no less than five different languages, including English. Von Henrik Brustad is the second of the giants. He is by birth a Norwegian, and extremely muscularly developed; he is about 8ft. high, twenty-four stone in weight, and the diameter of his

finger ring is one and a quarter inch. "Chamah," the Chinese dwarf, is the smallest man in the world. He is a native of Ningpan, an island of Chan-Sing, is forty-two years old, and only twenty-five inches high. "Attila," the "modern Hercules," whose wonderful feats of strength have won for him on the Continent, in the Provinces, and in London, a high reputation for graceful and unique athletics, appears here. His previous unrivalled artistic performances have made him an acknowledged favourite.

MISS PHILIP'S CONCERT.—The annual concert by this favourite composer has been prominently recognised among the recurring features of the London musical season, and, notwithstanding unfavourable weather, a large attendance assembled at St. James's Hall, and bore testimony to the high regard in which Miss Philip is held by her professional associates as well as by a large circle of personal friends.

THE STREETS OF PARIS.

SHADE trees and small parks (each decorated with appropriate statuary or fountains) are a speciality of Paris. The streets are, generally speaking, wide, and few are at all old in appearance or very narrow. While there is not everywhere a look of newness, yet there is nowhere an appearance of great antiquity in the streets; the buildings being of light colour, a cream tint prevailing, none of red brick or one of brown stone, makes all look cheerful, if not especially modern. The remarkable cleanliness of the streets is due to the excellent drainage. In the granite kerbstones are places about eight inches square, cut down into the stone, with iron trap doors to cover. From these places a pipe three inches in diameter comes out through the kerbstones toward the gutter.

Men and women go about, and after the streets have been swept with the machines, or by the hand brooms, as the case may be, and the dirt left in the gutter, they open these places, turn on the water, and an abundant supply is afforded in the gutters. All the refuse dirt is then swept into the sewer openings. The pipes named are at proper distances apart and are everywhere to be found where their use may be demanded. The sewers are on so grand a scale that they are one of the objects of especial interest to the tourists. Through some of the principal sewers are sidewalks, and even cars for transit of the curiosity-seeking visitor, and thousands visit them annually. The supply of water is great, and the means of conveyance perfect.

THE gnats, or rather midges, this spring are unusually poisonous. Along the valley of the Thames everyone is in a state of bumps or inflammation. Most folks for a cure go to the time-honoured blue bag, but American hayrum is a safer and pleasanter remedy.

THE Empress of Russia for some weeks before her death was kept in a room which was almost hermetically sealed from the outside atmosphere and fed, so far as her lungs were concerned, upon an aerated gaseous composition in which, of course, there was more than the usual quantity of ozone. It was only by this means that she was kept alive so long as she has been.

A SCIENTIFIC American has, for some reason best known to himself, turned his attention to the tug strain that human hair will stand. He is a doctor of Michigan, and we hear on authority he estimates that the supporting power represented by the hairs on the heads of 180,000 people is equal to 2,000,000 tons, and using a larger illustration, he calculates that the hair of the heads of the entire population of the globe could hold supported in space, against the gravity of the earth, the planet Vesta, and yet have 7,000,000,000,000 tons of strength to spare.



[A COURTELY GREETING.]

HESTER.

HESTER STANLEY entered the bright, airy room where her mother and her sister, Nita, were seated at work. They were up to their eyes in work, as ladies say. Spring sewing. Hester dropped into a chair and fanned herself with a big, stray paper fan of the Japanese pattern.

"Oh, dear, I'm so tired and so hot!"

"Twenty button-holes waiting for you, my dear," quoth Nita.

"Hester, suppose you make us all some iced lemonade before you get to work," suggested Mrs. Stanley, pitying the girl's hot, flushed face and fretted expression. "Presently, that is. When you are rested."

Nita saw no great hardship in sewing. She had been chattering like a gay little magpie to her mother all the morning, pitching her voice to be heard above the buzz of her sewing-machine. But Hester hated to sew. She felt like a condemned prisoner when she was settled down to make half-a-dozen of everything and a dozen of everything else.

And this her compassionate mother knew, and worked many a button-hole and ran up many a seam for her; now, to-day, had sent her down the street to purchase buttons and spool-cotton rather than see her bright face darken and lengthen over the uncongenial task.

The expedition to town had not proved a

success. Hester had returned more fagged than ever. But the lemonade suggested acted like a charm. Hester having fanned away a portion of her ill-humour, crossed the hall into the dining-room, put three silver mugs of ancient form upon a massive silver waiter, squeezed in lemon juice on the sugar, and added ice water, which proceeded to ooze out on the outside in gracious beaded drops.

Nita drank off her libation without ceremony. Mrs. Stanley heaved a sigh a trifle weary, as she leaned back and quaffed hers slowly. Hester began to revive. She smiled; she spoke in a pleasant tone of voice. One could see that she was really not only a very graceful, stylish girl, but that she also was rather pretty; not regularly pretty, but with a charming, bright face that defied criticism.

"I met Colonel Maynard on my way to town," she said, presently.

"Who? Do you mean our cousin?"

"Well, yes. I believe he is our forty-eleventh cousin."

"As rich as Croesus," put in Nita.

"Did not his wife die about a year ago?" inquired Mrs. Stanley.

"Yes," said Hester. "I don't believe it was a very congenial marriage, do you, mamma? Was not she a very peculiar person?"

"I have always heard she was a great invalid—never walked, never saw company."

"He married her for her money, didn't he, mamma?"

"So they say. But, dear me! who can tell?"

If it was so, I have no doubt that he found it a dear bargain."

"Well"—thus Nita—"if he married his first wife for her money, there is no doubt in my mind that his second wife will marry him for his."

"I don't see why," returned Hester. "I like Colonel Maynard; I can imagine a woman liking him well enough to marry him for himself."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes—a woman of a certain age; not a young woman like myself, of course. I agree with Owen Meredith, that 'gay youth loves gay youth.'"

"It seems natural that such should be the case," said Mrs. Stanley, returning to her ruffle.

"There was but a year's difference between your father and myself. We had so much in common. It was a matter of course for us to like the same things. I was nineteen when I was married; we were both too young, I am afraid."

Mrs. Stanley shook her head pensively, not sadly. She was not one of those who mourn over lost happiness. Rather she rejoiced that it had ever been hers; she looked forward to resuming it in a happier land.

"Cousin Henry—he asked me to call him, continued Hester, with a blush, "inquired for you, mamma; he said he would like to see you. He asked me whether I thought you would be at home this evening, and I said I thought you would be."

"Strange that he should be all at once seized with a desire to cultivate my acquaintance," said Mrs. Stanley, a little drily.

"I am afraid we owe his sudden friendship to Hester," laughed Nita. "If she had not made a conquest of him last night at Sheriff Ilchester's, I'm afraid he never would have resurrected mamma's image from the storied past."

"Nonsense!" Hester remarked, with decision, collecting the mugs, and marching off with them.

She returned to settle down for a quiet hour of button-holes, at the end of which time Aunt Henny put her turbaned head in at the door, to ask whether the ladies were ready for dinner.

"I've worked ten," announced Hester, jumping up, to cut the bread, take the butter off the ice and put it on the table, and ring the bell, which latter formality was as regularly indulged in as though they still had a waiter and did not follow the workings of the domestic machinery inch by inch.

Then after dinner there was the glass and silver to be washed and put away, and the dining-room to be straightened up. These duties devolved upon Hester, who was by no means a drone, although she did not like to sew. This brought her into the middle of the afternoon.

Still those ten other button-holes remained to be worked. And it was very warm, and Hester was tired, so tired that, by the time she had worked them and tossed the waist into a distant corner of the sewing-room, she could have cried. But then, she had lost sleep the night before, having been at this party at Sheriff Ilchester's.

Nevertheless, she made her afternoon toilet, putting on a clean lawn dress. Then she set the tea-table; again cut the bread, again took the butter off the ice, this time cracked the ice to put in the tea—this latter office being performed out of consideration to Aunt Henny.

Little, however, did Hester eat, having finally accomplished getting the meal together. But Nita's appetite never flagged. She had been buzz-buzzing ever since dinner at her machine, and now left it with actual reluctance. She was volubly explaining how she proposed to trim a new print dress she was making, when a carriage drove up to the door.

This was an event. There were only four carriages in Oakville; Sheriff Ilchester's rock-away, he living at the edge of the town; Mrs. Thame's, she being a great invalid, and owning the first and hitherto the last phaeton imported

into the quiet old town; and two livery stable equipages. This was one of the two—a no-top waggon.

The dining-room was at the end of the hall, and looked out upon the street. Nita peeped through the open dining-room and the blinds of the closed Venetian outer door.

"Colonel Maynard!"

"Do open the door, girls. Henny puffs and pants so coming up and downstairs."

Nita laughed.

"You will have to go, Hester. I am not in toilet. Besides, of course, he wants to see you."

Hester hesitated; longed for a servant to usher in her guest, and then hand in his card; then floated out to meet him. She led him into the dark, cool parlour, pushed open the blinds, and let in the bright sunset light, which showed the bare floor—those shabby genteel people followed the shabby genteel fashion of that part of the world, and always took up their threadbare carpets when the warm weather came, but the light also displayed respectable rows of family pictures, dim with age, and stately vases that would have filled with despair collectors of bric-a-brac; and quaintly carved chairs, and massive mantel-piece, and heavy mouldings on wall and ceiling. In a word, this ancient parlour told the whole tale. These Stanleys were of the poor and proud class.

"I have come to ask you to take a drive," Colonel Maynard said. "Will you go?"

"Oh, yes," Hester said.

A drive! This was always an event. But after the warm, fatiguing day she had passed it seemed to her that it would be a foretaste of Heaven to get a breath of country air. She started up.

"I'll get my hat," she said.

"And meanwhile may I have the pleasure of paying my respects to your mother?"

"I will tell mamma you are here," and Hester withdrew with a flowing courtesy that would have done her credit in a queen's drawing-room.

Mrs. Stanley came in presently; greeted Colonel Maynard, with her quiet, simple courtesy just as he was wondering whether all old-fashioned chairs were as hard as these.

"It has been a long while since we met, Colonel Maynard. You brought your wife here once, ten years ago. Not since then, I think."

"No, I believe not. You are looking quite well, madam."

Mrs. Stanley could not make up her mind to return the compliment. Her forty-eleven cousin looked even more than ten years older since she saw him last. He was stout; he was weather-beaten; he had lost every trace of youthful vivacity he had ever possessed; he looked heavy both as regarded mind and body. In truth, Mrs. Stanley was so impressed with this fact that it occurred to her that conversation with him would be to the last degree a labour and effort. She was debating what remark to make to him next, having thanked him for his favourable criticism without eliciting any further conversational effort on his part, when Hester returned. Colonel Maynard arose with alacrity.

"You will trust your daughter to me for an hour or so, Mrs. Stanley?"

"I hope you are a good driver," said Mrs. Stanley, her wonted motherly anxiety sharpened by the unwonted character of the expedition. A horse in Oakville was scarcely regarded as a domestic animal.

Colonel Maynard knew to the full as much about horses as about men. He took his ability to drive the most unruly steed so much for granted that he did not appreciate Mrs. Stanley's genuine apprehension in the least. He answered absently, as he put Hester into the waggon:

"A child could drive these old hacks."

Hester's eyes danced; her colour rose. This was delightful. Colonel Maynard whipped up the horses, who did their best, and bowled them out of town in fine style.

"Oh, isn't this lovely!" cried Hester.

"Would you like to drive yourself?"

"Oh, yes. May I?"

This filled her cup of bliss to overflowing. She rattled on like a talking machine. Colonel Maynard looked at her with unfeigned admiration. This gay, bright, talkative girl attracted him singularly. I suppose it was the law of contrast.

He asked a good many questions, and Hester answered them frankly. The fresh air, the motion, the novelty of the situation, made her communicative; before they returned home Colonel Maynard had found out a good deal about her. Before he left Oakville he had found out a good deal more.

The Stanleys had a great many friends; every one knew just how good they were, how poor, how cheerful and uncomplaining; although there had been times when they had been put to it to make both ends meet. It was no secret that they eked out a slender income by taking in sewing. If it was not their own spring sewing it was someone else's all the year round.

When Colonel Maynard lifted Hester out of the waggon in the moonlight, her mother and sister were sitting on the broad stone steps gossiping peacefully. A spinster neighbour had come in to sit with Mrs. Stanley; a tall young man rose from the deep shadows and advanced to shake hands with Hester.

This was Nita's adorer, who haunted the Stanleys' sitting-room in winter, their front doorsteps in summer. Nita and he had been engaged two years, and seemed to be no nearer the end of their engagement than they had been when it was first entered upon.

Dan Hyde was practising law now; he had only been admitted to the bar six months ago. It was a long way yet to that part of the ladder where he would begin to make money. Meanwhile, he and Nita were happy. Nita had a happy talent for living in the present. It was food for satisfaction for her that Dan cared for her, that she saw him every day, and that he had decided not to leave Oakville for the present.

Colonel Maynard spent an hour or so on those sociable steps. He tied the horses, and settled himself down comfortably. He liked it. He felt ten years younger. I will let you into the secret of this state of mind. He had missed his youth; he had been disappointed in his married life. Hence he had grown dull and deadened. But all the while he had capabilities of enjoyment; sitting there in the moonlight, it flashed upon him that he had many discoveries to make in the delights of life.

Glancing over at Nita and Dan, he envied that tall, good-looking young fellow with the light moustache. One could see at a glance that he and pretty Miss Stanley were lovers. Miss Nita was prettier than her sister; but all the same he preferred Hester's face. He called her Hester in thinking of her, mark. She was years younger than himself, and beside, he was her father's cousin; so why not?

A month later found him again in Oakville; more drives, more talks in the moonlight or starlight. Hester and he were very good friends by this time. He came to see her one morning, to make an engagement to ride on horseback with her that afternoon. Aunt Henny admitted him, then puffed back to the kitchen, where Hester was busy fluting the ruffles of her white dress, with a red face and hands as red.

"Oh, dear!" Hester was in a pet directly. "I've only finished the overskirt. It's too bad. Couldn't you go on with this for me, Aunt Henny?"

"There's all my own ironin', child, and the potatoes to pare, and the rice to wash. I'm willin' to do it, if yer ma'll put back the dinner."

Hester made a grimace behind the old woman's back.

"Oh, well, if you can't you can't, and there's an end of it. But, indeed, you'll have to take a message to Mr. Maynard for me."

"It do give me shortness of breath awful bad this yer goin' up and down the stairs. Well, miss, what am I to say?"

"Tell him that I am busy, but that I'll see him in about a quarter of an hour, if he can wait that long."

Aunt Henny departed. She returned after a time.

"He says he can wait. Not to hurry yourself, miss. He can find a book."

Hester fluted, fluted. Scorched the ruffle on her sleeve; burnt her finger. But she finished her dress. Finally she ran downstairs with it, and hung it up in her room triumphantly. Then she plunged her face in a basin of cold water; looked disgustedly at it in the glass, and at her crimson hands out of the glass. But there was no help for it. She must hurry down to Colonel Maynard.

"Oh, dear, I am so warm! I thought I never should be through. I am so sorry I kept you waiting!"

"What were you doing?"

Colonel Maynard was famous for asking point-blank questions.

"Ironing—that is, fluting. Such hot work."

"Why doesn't that old woman do it for you?"

"Oh, she's old and wheezy, and has the cooking to do; besides—the other ironing. Fluting is an extra. I don't believe I shall ever be cool again."

"I'll tell you what. Let us go to the town and get some ice-cream; it is not far. Will you?"

"Oh, no—but yes, I think I will. I do like ice-cream."

So they went. Hobnobbing over a heaping saucer of vanilla cream and a bountiful plate of macaroons Hester remarked:

"I wish I could have ice-cream every day. I love sweet things, and we never have them. Bread and butter, beef and mutton, is the daily bread we are thankful for."

"Will you have some more?"

"Thank you, yes. This will be my dinner. I am becoming rapidly consoled for my scorching. Oh dear, how I hate to be poor!"

"Do you really mind it?"

"Of course I mind it. I hate to sew, Cousin Henry, and I hate to set tables and dust and iron, and to spoil my hands."

"You have such pretty hands, too. Why do you never wear rings? I thought that all young girls liked rings."

"I don't wear rings because I have none to wear. I wish I had. Goldschmidt has a lovely ring in his case—an amethyst. A great oval stone, set up on claws. Do you not love amethysts?"

"They are red stones, are they not?"

"Goodness, no. Lovely purple stones; violet colour, you know."

"Hester, let me give you that ring."

Hester looked longingly at the finger on which she pictured to herself the coveted ring.

"You are awfully good to me," she said.

"But I think not."

Having made this heroic protest she rose, solemnly helped herself to the last macaroon in the dish, which she munched with deliberation, while he paid the bill at the counter on their way out.

The next day he brought her the aforesaid ring. He had come in again in the morning; she had seated herself on an uncomfortable, backless ottoman, and had dragged a heavy, lumbering arm-chair forward for him to sit in. She was leaning forward, her arm on a table, her chin on her hand. He took a little box out of his pocket and from it a ring, which he handed to her.

"Here is your purple stone, Hester. If you won't take it as a gift, at least wear it as a loan."

She smiled, tried it on, turned it about.

"Isn't it pretty?" she said, pleased as a child. And with another smile the matter ended. Admit Colonel Maynard had reason to be encouraged.

As for Mrs. Stanley, she made no objection. She considered Colonel Maynard in the light of a fatherly relation. And Hester was her baby, her little one. She could not bring herself to imagine the possibility of anything like a love affair for a long time yet.

But in the bottom of her selfish little heart

was a kind of travelling auctioneer, a little like the 'Cheap Jacks' who go about with vans and set up open air sales in England, and this flute was sweet toned; I chose it as an easy means of gaining food while I followed you and your husband on your bridal tour.

"Thus I followed you. When I felt hungry or thirsty I approached a gentleman's house, or hotel, or farm, or a village inn, and produced my flute and played airs merry or plaintive as the whim seized me, and in all cases people flocked out and gave me pieces of silver, or invited me into the house to sit down and partake of their hospitality. I have been considered a proficient on the flute and I play passing well, and all this humiliation I have endured that I might seek your presence—I, in my shabby garments, haggard, worn, wild-looking, not to tell you that as long as I lived I should adore you in spite of your cruelty, that I would have hidden from you—but to tell you that I counted you, for all your beauty and your pomp, a very demon of wickedness for the injury you had done, and now I know you for what you are—noble, gentle, divine as I thought you at first, and, in spite of everything, I am happy, Kate, for you still love me, do you not?"

The separated lovers were both so absorbed that they did not hear either a footstep or the rustle of a skirt in the next room; they did not see Pomfret kneeling on the floor, holding her very breath lest the sound of it should reach them, pale, with dilating eyes and closed teeth, and the look of an evil spirit in the ghastly face, listening to the words they might utter, hoping for a chance to hurl Lady Kate to ruin.

"You still love me, do you not?"

"Yes," Kate answered, after a pause; "yes, but only now, Cecil, as a woman may love a cherished memory, or weep over a grave in which her brightest hopes lie buried, for I desire to keep the commandments of Heaven—I am another man's wife."

Blank, utter silence for a space. The pallor of the kneeling Pomfret changed to a hideous purple hue.

"Foiled," she said in her heart; "foiled when I have laid this trap so well, when I would give ten years of my life to brand her with the name of adulteress, and to make her despicable in my lord's eyes. Foiled! Oh, if her prudery and pious nature prove too strong for Cecil's love—if temptation is resisted, and what is called goodness triumphs, I must still make it appear that she is false. Ah, my lady, how your humble servant hates you and longs for the time to come as come it must and will, when you shall stand begging your bread at the corners of London streets, dressed in the sorriest of rags—but before then Cecil Renfrew must have been sent into penal servitude for life as we have planned."

"I love you, Cecil, but only for the memory of the past, which is still precious to me; only as a wife may love one to whom she once gave her maiden heart—a wife, Cecil, who may one day be a mother, and that is a name so holy that all other human aims and loves must give way before it. If I had been your wife I would have striven to be the best wife in all Christendom, and now as the wife of Henri it is still my aim to do my duty. Let me help you, Cecil, as a sister might help a brother—let me give you money."

"Ha, I shall trap them yet!"

Positively in her excitement Pomfret hissed these words, but they who had been lovers were far too much absorbed in each other to give them heed.

"Kate," said Cecil, sorrowfully, "Kate, do you think me so mean? No, it is impossible that you should think I would owe one shilling to you and your husband. I would rather die—you ought to know that. No, let me go away. I know that you are too good for earth, as far above me as the stars. I must worship you even as those of the old faith worship their Madonna. As for my life it is a wreck, but yours may be as sweet, noble, as useful, a living prayer, a holy life dedicated to charity and all good works, such a life as I have dreamed of. For myself, forget me, or only think of me in the twilight for a few

moments. If you have little children, and if you teach them to say their prayers, ask them to pray for Cecil Renfrew, a wanderer upon the face of the earth—whose life a scheming woman has smitten with a curse, and dismiss that fiend, that woman called Pomfret."

"I will," Kate spoke, clearly and loudly.

Pomfret, listening in the next room, heard the words and she grinned—we cannot say she smiled, the expression is too mild. A distorted, horrible face was hers when she heard Cecil kiss the hand of the woman he had loved and lost, and then steal away with almost reckless footsteps through the corridors that led out to the moonlit garden of the chateau, and then Pomfret heard Kate fall upon her knees and lift up her sweet young voice in prayer for Heaven's blessing upon Cecil Renfrew, that he might learn to love duty and ever more to cleave to that which is right, and that he might find happiness in well-doing and prosper all the days of his life.

"Have they then escaped me?" Pomfret asked herself, as she arose from her knees. "Have they? No, I will work your ruin yet, my lady."

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Kate strove to be very loving and dutiful to her husband as the days went on, but she was sensible of a certain coldness and hardness in his tone which smote most painfully upon her sensitive heart. She had not a soul in that lonely chateau in whom she could confide.

As for Pomfret she did not speak to her except of flounces, ribbons, laces, and satins. She had made up her mind to part with her perfidious maid, but still Kate was gifted with a large share of common sense, and she felt that to come to open rupture with her maid here in the heart of a strange country, among the mountains of Switzerland, would cause remark—would make the marquis wonder.

She did not forget that very strange conversation with her husband on the evening after their marriage, when, in the railway carriage, he had told her then that he knew that she had loved her father's secretary, and she had been honest enough not to deny it; while at the same time she told the marquis that her love and respect for Cecil were gone.

If he should ever hear that the unhappy lover had followed her on her wedding tour on foot, had penetrated into her presence, had entered into explanations, been forgiven, kneeled at her feet, kissed her hand, and parted from her if not a favoured lover still as a friend, beloved as a brother—if the marquis should hear all this he would be (Kate knew it by instinct) angry, with a terrible anger, none the less violent because of late the burning ardour of his love for his beautiful young wife seemed to have strangely cooled.

"Can I have already a rival?" Kate asked herself.

If a woman has even only a moderate liking for her husband the bare idea of a rival is almost maddening to her, that is if she is a true and pure-minded woman with wifely instincts, and a love in the main for "whatsoever things are of good report."

Kate had given her first girlish, impassioned love to Cecil, but when she believed him false she had turned to the marquis, married him, striven with all her might to do her duty by him. Henri de St. Germaine was one of the handsomest, most fascinating men in Europe, and it came to pass that Kate gave him much of her heart—it was a large and generous, and affectionate and noble heart.

Her love for poor Cecil passed into the moonlit, mysterious, melancholy region of memory. She was noble and true souled, and she crushed all vague yearnings as mean, ignoble, unworthy, and then the poor child found all at once that her husband was not as he had been.

It seemed that he took no pleasure in her gay and innocent conversation; if she went and sat before one of the huge grand pianos in one of the grand old rooms of the Chateau Bronté, if she sang very sweetly and accompanied herself, he scarcely seemed to listen; and when she

ceased he scarcely offered her thanks. He wandered off in the wood followed by the huge dogs which he had brought from England; if she offered to accompany him he told her that he was going further than she could walk.

"Then let us ride or drive, Henri; we have good hired horses in the stables."

"No, I hate driving or riding this autumn weather, I like to stroll a great distance and then sit down to rest."

There were some few neighbouring chateaux where noble French or Swiss families resided, and after a while some of these ladies and gentlemen called on the marquis and marchioness. In a little time Kate found that her husband only meant to return the visit of one out of the four families who called, and his choice fell on the very persons most distasteful to Kate.

A certain old German baron, famed for his dissipated life in London, in Paris, in Rome, had hired the chateau of an absentee noble; the chateau was called St. Denis. The Baron Plomb, that was his ugly name, had many visitors that autumn at St. Denis.

He was an old gentleman of fine tastes who very much appreciated the fine arts, music, sculpture, painting, poetry, the drama, and St. Denis was filled with artists and artistes of all descriptions this autumn. When old Baron Plomb first called at Chateau Bronté it was one hot afternoon in the first days of September.

Kate, feeling languid and half sad, she scarcely knew why, was leaning back on a couch which had been carried out to the stone terrace facing the mountain; on that side the sun had no power.

Kate wore a white dress of some light gauzy stuff. Her fair hair was bound with a pale green ribbon. Her sole ornament was a bunch of wood violets placed like a brooch on her black lace collar. She had a book of poems in her hand—poems of the more sad and sentimental sort, treating of lost love, when all at once she heard the sound of ringing laughter on the terrace.

She was too well bred to show that she was startled or surprised when she saw the old Baron Plomb, whom she had only met once before in her life, standing before her with his hat in his hand; his white hair and enormous moustache, likewise white as snow, gave nothing venerable to his cynical, clever, handsome old face with its finely cut features and mocking eyes.

"A thousand pardons," said the baron. "Allow me to introduce to you, madame, Mademoiselle Victorine Sala and Madame von Fitte, also Monsieur Pierre, of whom you have probably heard as one of the most distinguished novelists in France."

Kate arose stately and fair as a lily. She bowed, smiled, and did the honours of the chateau to her unexpected guests in a very graceful, charming fashion. All the while she was sensible of the eyes, the smile, the beauty of Mademoiselle Victorine Sala—yes, smile and beauty affected her as no human eyes or smile had ever affected her before.

What was it—how was it? Madame von Fitte was a great singer. Everybody knew that she had sung at the opera during the early part of the London season. She was a large extravagant blonde, with a loud voice, loud manners, a mouth that suggested a gourmande, one who cared infinitely for the pleasures of the table, and appreciated good wines and good cookery more than all the music or poetry in the world. Kate hastily judged her as a vulgar celebrity with whom she wished not to associate.

Monsieur Pierre was known as the writer of the most immoral stories that have disgraced French literature during the last ten years. He was a little ugly man, with thick lips, and searching, small, restless grey eyes. But Victorine—there is such a thing as a wifely instinct which, jealousy apart, points out to a true souled woman the rival who would fain supplant her and trample her into the dust. Kate, beautiful as a garden lily, knew this black-haired Victorine for a rival the moment she looked upon her.

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CHAPTER XXII.

VICTORINE THE ACTRESS.

A woman big and brown,
Who was the rage in town,
Who sang and dressed and dined,
And had an empty mind.

BLACK-HAIRED Victorine—was she beautiful? Yes and no—yes, in the sense of possessing a splendid contour of form—eyes magnificent in depth, clearness and brilliancy; eyes black as night, large, glittering with unsuspected depths in them; eyes in which, so to speak, a man's very soul might lose itself; eyes which could languish or dart fiery flames of love or hate at the will of their owner; weird, wonderful eyes.

The complexion was of a clear brunette, colourless, that is untinged by even the faintest rose, and yet not pale; a warm brown like the hue of the olive, red lips, a mouth beautiful and yet sensual, with white teeth gleaming as in mockery when she smiled. A woman tall and grand and superb, with smooth cheeks, long black lashes, a nose rather insignificant, that somehow gave a want of dignity to the countenance, level black brows, a low, square forehead, massed over with rippling coal-black hair.

Such was Victorine Sala to look upon. She wore a close fitting dress of gold-coloured silk, with black satin trimmings, a gold-coloured feather in a hat of black satin, a large white camelia on her ample breast. Her age might have varied from twenty-five to thirty. A magnificent woman, large, bold, daring, triumphant—a woman with worldly success stamped upon her low brow, insolence painted on her ruddy lips.

Who was Victorine Sala? Nobody knew what she had been before the Baron Plomb became her patron, that was three years ago now, and he had then introduced her to the theatrical world of Paris as a great actress. She spoke both French and English with equal ease and fluency. Her voice was harsh both in singing and speaking; but she was a consummate actress of certain roles.

She could take the part of an intrigante, a coquette, or a furious virago, to perfection. Also she danced well, and though her voice was harsh it was clear, and she managed it well when singing in burlesque or opera bouffe; and under the patronage of the Baron Plomb, mademoiselle became the fashion, if not the rage, in Paris, Vienna and Milan.

She was a woman who exercised a powerful fascination over certain kinds of men. She was quite heartless, yet she was of a sensuous nature, loving good wines and rich food and luxurious fruits and bright flowers, gay trappings, luxurious carriages, fleet horses, splendid furniture, soft carpets, everything that ministered to the senses.

She had a certain kind of daring wit; she was very merry, and mocked pitilessly at everybody who was plain or sad, or in ailing health, or poor, or weak, or elderly. Hers was the instinct of the animal who with his strong fellows sets on a sick comrade and wounds or tramples him to death.

She had no pity for the poor. She was the kind of woman to meet with success in the world, and she met with it. Yes, Kate knew her for a rival and an enemy the moment her eyes rested on her.

"It is so hot," said the young marquise, "that I have come out to sit on the terrace."

Victorine scarcely smiled. She had accepted a low velvet seat which had been placed for her by one of the footmen, and she listlessly picked up the volume of poems from the end of the couch, opened it, made a grimace, and threw it down again.

Kate had been watching her. The colour deepened on her fair cheek. She understood without being told that Mademoiselle Victorine despised poetry and those who read it.

"She shall never come to the chateau again," said Kate to herself.

Then she turned away and began with gentle, well-bred ease to converse with the Baron Plomb, and soon she rang a silver handbell.

"We still carry the London fashion of afternoon tea with us here into the Swiss mountains," she said, smiling. "Will you step into the salon; it is all prepared."

She looked at Victorine as she spoke. Victorine smiled a careless, almost insulting smile, and rose. The baron bowed and offered Kate his arm. Madame von Fitté laughed a loud laugh, and said she was terribly thirsty, and thrust her arm through that of the novelist, Monsieur Pierre, and Victorine broke into a derisive titter, for the novelist had not intended to offer his arm to madame, but to Victorine, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, and the look of blank disappointment on the ugly, clever face of the little clever man amused the cruel beauty.

They all went into the large salon, where a dainty afternoon tea was tastefully laid out. Old china, rare flowers, delicious fruits, made a little poem of the tea table. Monsieur Pierre looked at the tapestried walls, the antique chairs, the old paintings, with the interest of a man of letters who is always seeking materials for the descriptions that enhance a story, but Victorine began to eat grapes, peaches, and cream tarts with avidity.

How was it that Kate felt so uncomfortable—so anxious that her visitors should depart before the return of her husband? All at once Victorine arose, and without saying a word, passed through the great open French window out to the stone terrace. Then indeed she looked back over her shoulder, and she said, carelessly:

"I am going to find my way to the gardens. I like before all things wandering about in strange places alone. Please nobody follow me," flashing a look of stern command upon Monsieur Pierre, and then mademoiselle passed out of sight of her friends.

She went swiftly along the terrace, and down some steps to a lawn. At the end of this was a belt of tall beech trees, and instinct told mademoiselle that the gardens lay behind. She was not long in finding her way to them. They were beautiful gardens, those at Chateau Bronté, broad paths of yellow gravel, level lawns, green as emerald, with here and there gay flowers embroidering them in fanciful devices, little alleys of blooming shrubs, late flowing roses, and many coloured rhododendrons leading off to thickets of white clematis and purple wisteria, amid which fountains sparkled—fountains of white marble, all of them masterpieces of the sculptor's art.

Victorine wandered on; the hum of the bees as they dipped into the flower cups, the songs of the birds on the branches, the flitting of the glorious winged butterflies which in this district seem to fill the air with living jewels, emerald, sapphire, amethyst, and ruby, the grand calm background of the mountains, the ripple of the water, the rustle of the trees; none of these things caused mademoiselle to pause or ponder or admire.

No, not for one single moment. On she went, deep she dived into the flowering thickets, and then when she came to a fountain she sat down and looked about her. Presently she put her red lips into a peculiar shape and she whistled a long shrill whistle.

After that she took off her black satin hat with its gold-coloured feather, and she leaned her dark head lazily against the trunk of an acacia tree. She closed her eyes; she even slept, for her brow was fanned by the cool breeze, and a pleasant drowsiness crept over her.

Victorine was the kind of young woman who always took life easily, and enjoyed to the full every possible advantage that came in her way. Thus feeling drowsy she yielded at once to the desire for sleep, and straightway passed off at once into the land of dreams.

"There is nothing so potent in procuring man or woman a quiet conscience," remarks some wise philosopher, "as a good digestion." A very cynical observation, but like most caustic sayings, it has its grain of truth. Victorine Sala was not a good woman, indeed

she was one who disdained and disbelieved in all human goodness, a woman who secretly mocked at the names of virtue and truth and charity.

She was more than negatively to be defined as simply not a good woman; she was actively a bad one, but she seldom had a bad dream, and she would have told her confidants that the sole reason for this was that her appetite was excellent and her digestion perfect.

She slept. She was rudely awakened by somebody bending a branch of an apple tree which grew close to the fountain and then letting it flap into her face—probably this buffet was even a little painful. She awoke with a start, sprang to her feet and uttered some oaths in French and afterwards in English. Her great black eyes flashed angrily, she saw standing before her, in the neat becoming garb of a domestic, none other than Miss Cecilia Pomfret.

"You ugly idiot," she said, furiously, "you great hateful cochin."

"Call me a pig in English at once if you like," Miss Pomfret answered, with a cold smile. "As for my being ugly—well, that is not true; if I were dressed as you can dress people would call me handsome. As for you, you are not handsome, you are big and brown. You have black eyes and red lips and white teeth, and your heart is cold as ice. You feel nothing, and thus you make men care for you—that is a kind of law of nature, and you can sit with her as an equal. You have hundreds of pounds where I only have as many shillings, and you are to become a marquise, and one day a duchess—are you? And you can sleep and loll and dawdle while I have to sew and run up and downstairs, doing the bidding of the creature I hate as if I were a dog. I was determined I would make the apple tree give you a slap in the face. I wish it had made your eye water or your nose red, but your face is as if it was cut in stone."

And now anybody who knew the faces of those two women, Pomfret and Victorine, would have seen the strong subtle likeness between them. Victorine was by far the handsomer; she was a year or two younger than Pomfret, but there could be no mistaking them for other than sisters, or at least, first cousins when their faces were studied together. Anyhow, the eyes of mademoiselle flashed fire, and her lips were curled in a bitter smile.

"Never mind," she said, quietly, "I will repay this with interest one day. Now to business. Tell me, is this white cat he calls his Kate quite devoted to him so that we can't cast a slur upon her? You know I have not the least patience. I have made up my mind to marry Henri, Marquis de St. Germaine, because he is the richest man in Europe, and he will one day be a duke. If he had met me before he was tied to this woman he would have fluttered round me, admired me, and have left me. A thorough man of the world like this marquis is never desperate about one woman till he is chained to another. When I saw him at the theatre at Geneva a month ago for the first time I was acting, and I saw that he was struck with me. His wife was not with him. I heard who he was, I know him then. He had married the very girl whom you and I, ourselves then tiny children, have learned to hate from the day of her birth. A bright thought struck me, and I resolved to win his love."

"I got an introduction to him that very night, and I fascinated him at once. After that I sent him my likeness, and you tell me that for days and days he carried it out into the woods with him and talked to it like a maniac, then he grew cool to his doll of a wife. After that I procured an invitation to the chateau of the Baron Plomb, my old friend and patron; the baron invited him to dinner, since then he has been at the chateau nearly every day. He is mad for me, I keep him at bay—nothing less than his fortune and title will satisfy me. Tell me, then, can we make him divorce her, or must we kill her?"

Mademoiselle asked the question with the utmost coolness.

"I would rather let her live and suffer," Pomfret answered; "and, besides, if you kill a per-



[DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.]

son it would be so very dreadful if one were to be found out. But I think I have the materials for a cause celebre close at hand: first of all you must drive her mad through jealousy, when a woman or a man becomes jealous he or she are capable of the most extravagant actions."

"I have driven many wives frantic," said the diabolical Victorine, "for my simple amusement, but none of those husbands were rich enough for me to marry. Now this one is in every way desirable."

"Are you in love with him?" asked Pomfret.

"In love?" the other answered. "I don't understand what that means; he is rich and handsome and distingué; one would be proud of him in his uniform of an officer at a court ball, but, of course, now under the Republic he does not serve in the French army. Yes, he is handsome and clever. I admire his blue eyes; he gives me diamonds. I mean to become his wife, but I am impatient, it must come about quickly. I want you to help me to make this doll he calls Kate frantic. I mean to come and stay here in this chateau at once. Tell me," Victorine added, after a pause, "has not this doll a lover—could you not make the husband believe that she had trifled with his honour. He is so desperately in love with me that I feel sure he will not scruple to send her about her business if she gives him the least excuse."

"I think we can manage that," said Pomfret, "but you must not provoke me or show me your insolent pride. You must and shall remember that I am your own sister."

"I am not likely to forget that interesting fact, my dear," Victorine answered, scornfully. "And now suppose that we return to the house."

She arose as she spoke, shook out her gold-coloured silken skirts, and languidly nodded at her sister Cecilia.

"When I am a duchess, Cissy, I will marry you to some rich trader, so that you have plenty of money; you care for nothing else, not even if your trader is fat, old, ugly, is fond of

garlic if he is an Italian, or of beer if he is a German. Good-bye, my dear," and Victorine walked towards the house.

When she approached the terrace she saw her friends standing there, and with them not only the young Marquise Kate, but the tall blonde, fair-haired Marquis Henri, who came to meet her with extended hands, and eyes glittering with a certain fiery admiration. She received him coldly, languidly, giving him only the tips of her fingers.

"Let me sit down, if you please," she said, in English; "the afternoon is so hot, I am tired to death."

In an instant he had placed a chair for the actress. She sank into it and unfastened a fan of black and gold from her girdle. She handed this fan to the marquis.

"Fan me, will you?" she said; "I feel so exhausted!"

He took the fan obediently, and began to fan the modern Cleopatra as if he had been her Eastern slave. Victorine darted a look pregnant with cruelty at Lady Kate. The young wife, pale and calm, sat with a forced smile at a little distance from Victorine talking to the old Baron Plomb.

"Charmed to make your acquaintance, madame," said the old nobleman. "I had no idea that my friend Henri had so enchanting a wife."

Kate smiled and bowed.

"I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing your chateau, monsieur," she said, "but I hear that it is one of the finest in Switzerland."

"You must come next Monday week to the garden-party and ball I purpose giving," said the baron. "I shall have a band and cooks and some dancers and singers from Paris."

Kate bowed. She could not refuse, though her heart sank.

"I hope soon to return to England," she said to herself, "and to see nothing more of yonder horrible woman to whom Henri is devoting himself."

All at once the marquis came up to his wife,

bowed to the baron, then stooped down and whispered into Kate's ear.

"Invite Mademoiselle Victorine to stay with us. We will send a carriage for her luggage."

Kate's fair face flushed crimson to the roots of her hair. Her husband was looking at her coldly and sternly with his blue eyes.

"Not now," said Kate. "I am not well enough to entertain strangers."

"I will entertain her," the marquis said.

Kate bowed her head.

"An actress," she murmured.

"The rage of crowned heads. She has refused the hands of princes," said the marquis. "My dear Kate, while we are on the Continent, at least, try to leave your English pride behind in your smoky London that I so much detest."

At that moment Victorine in her yellow silk came up to the young wife. Looking at her she said:

"I have just accepted the invite of the marquis to remain at the chateau; he tells me you will send for my luggage."

"I am not well enough, madam, to entertain visitors!" said Kate.

She stood erect; a hectic colour burnt in her cheeks; her blue eyes flashed; but Victorine was equal to the occasion.

"Henri will amuse me," she said, "if you are top ill."

The marquis turned towards the shameless jade who was the fashion.

"Your luggage shall be sent for at once," he said.

"And now," said Victorine, "where is my cigar case? I will smoke for an hour or so before dinner."

"Am I turned out of my own house?" asked Kate of her bursting heart.

She bowed to her departing guests. In another ten minutes she was left alone on the terrace. Before her was the mountain; behind her was the setting sun. Her brain seemed on fire. A voice in her wild heart urged her to some desperate deed.

(To be Continued.)



[ON THE SANDS.]

CONQUERED BY LOVE.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

THE glorious summer sunset, flooding the beautiful beach at Hastings, illumined two youthful figures slowly walking towards Fairlight Glen. Lovers, without a doubt. A shy, tender joy irradiated the girl's face; fondest, truest devotion glowed in the eager looks of the young man whispering in her willing ear.

All Nature seemed to smile upon these young people, although they paid little heed to her, utterly absorbed in each other. The opalescent tints of the sky, the shimmer and glancing of molten gold upon the undulating waves, the dark and sombre crags standing out against the rose-tinted clouds, the yellow sands, the cheerful boats dancing on the water, skimming here and there like a flock of sea-birds, helped only to form a splendid background to these sauntering lovers, more interested in the oldest of old stories than in the most magnificent effects of sea and sky.

Truth to tell, it was the most important hour that had ever arrived in the short years of their lives, and the future did not look so roseate as these sunlit moments. Frank Ireton had avowed his love and obtained a response which made his heart thrill with joy. But he was going away, uncertain when he might return to England.

He had eagerly, earnestly implored Jannette Verity to marry him, and thus make sure of nothing separating them—had even urged her to leave England and go with him; but she had steadily refused. It is hard for a girl of eighteen to refuse the pleadings of her first love, doubly hard when her own heart whispers convincing arguments in his favour.

But Jannette was one of those rarely-gifted

beings—one with a deeply tender, fond heart, yet one who can suffer and be strong. No one, looking at her fair, fragile face and form, or into the depths of her innocent blue eyes, could have divined the noble, resolute soul that lay enshrined within.

"No, dearest Frank," she said, gently—her soft, melodious voice was almost her greatest charm—"I promise faithfully to wait until you can claim me—it may be in loneliness and poverty, in temptation and strife; but I cannot desert my duty. I cannot leave the one who has been to me father, mother, brother, sister—all I have in the world, when else I must have been helpless and alone."

"Jannette, love—"

"Nay. She has made many sacrifices for me; it is my bounden duty to make such poor offerings of gratitude as I may—some sacrifice for her dear sake. It is a painful choice which I am obliged to make," added the girl, with a little choking sigh, as she softly pressed her lover's arm. "But I must choose."

He caught both her hands—they looked so irresistibly pretty in the black lace mittens which made the slender fingers white as rose petals—he kissed the trembling prisoned hands, and his passionate soul gazed so pleadingly at her that she turned away her head lest she should yield.

"Darling, consider," he argued. "Your grandmother—whom I have learnt to love for your sake, if not for her own—she would never expect you to cloud and blight your young life, from a false sense of duty to her. It is not as if she were helpless or ill, or as if you had to toil for her. Therefore, why deny me the joy and encouragement you would give in the struggle that lies before me? But I ought not to entreat," he went on, with the peculiar kind of diplomacy used by lovers. "I have nothing but a hard, struggling life, with my deep, deep love to offer you."

Jannette stopped and looked at him. They were alone, under the sweet shadow of the overhanging hazel and alder trees, beneath which

the tinkling brook glided, singing merrily, sadly, joyously, pathetically—a sheltered spot, where many lovers' vows, faithfully kept, heartlessly broken, had been exchanged in the long, misty past years. The western sun shone full on her pure, candid, fearless face.

"I do not dread poverty," she said, the ring of truth in her accents. "I have never known aught else. I never desired riches. I should be almost sorry if you came back with wealth and station to offer me. When I have read about princesses and great ladies, I have never wished to be like them. But often, when I have read of women who have been compelled to fight against pain, poverty and misfortune, my heart has bent, and I have longed to be like one of them."

"Darling, sweet, you do not know what a real fight with the world means," said Frank. He had not for a moment doubted the truth of her reason for refusing to become his wife at once. "Would that I had wealth. If I had our way would be clear and bright. But I will say no more. You will be true, will you not? I know, I feel you will. You will write to me constantly? Indeed, I will not let you forget, for the only pleasure I can promise myself when away from you will be writing to you."

They continued their slow, sweet, sauntering ramble through the glen, until they at length reached the Dropping Well above. The place was deserted, and they spent some few delicious moments, watching the tiny streamlet trickling over its rock into the black hollow beneath; under the grey-green shadow of the rich foliage overhanging it. But time was passing only too swiftly; the soft, cool shades of evening warned them to turn away from this glimpse of Eden, and to retrace their steps.

The shortest way to Jannette's home lay across the fields and road, always a pleasant ramble. As they emerged from the fields into the road, a gentleman on horseback, unobserved by them, riding at a short distance, suddenly looked at the young couple as if petrified by amazement.

Having apparently assured himself that he

was not wrong in recognising at least one of the handsome figures, he turned his horse deliberately round, and slowly followed them. He was evidently not unwilling to be heard and seen, but was at too great a distance for his horse's steps to be readily noticed, and the lovers went on sublimely, happily unconscious of his proximity.

The cottage—it could hardly be dignified with the name of house—where Jannette lived was a pretty, picturesque little dwelling, the kind of half ideal place beloved by artists.

Roses and evergreens seemed to run wild all over its walls, making it a fragrant bower. It might have been the home of a fairy princess as it lay nestling there, the soft evening air bringing out the exquisite scent of the roses which clustered and clambered in a singular profusion. The wee garden lay like a handful of garnered fragrance, a faint yellow moon shining down upon it, mingled with the last dying light of day.

"Your grandmother would perhaps be displeased to see me, as it is getting so late," said Frank. "I had better leave you and come in the morning."

Mrs. Morrison solved this small difficulty by appearing in the porch. A glance showed her that the end foreseen by her for some time had arrived, and she held out a hand to each, a smile on her withered yet still handsome old face.

The gentleman who had followed unnoticed to the last had seen all, and waited until the young lovers went in. Then he slowly rode on. He was a stately man of perhaps fifty years of age, with a stern yet by no means unpleasant face, portly, well-dressed, evidently an excellent terms with himself.

"Soho, my worthy Master Frank," he said, half aloud. "I had no idea you were amusing yourself in this way. This kind of thing must be stopped, my good sir, and the sooner the better."

He rode on still slowly, plunged in reflection, until he reached the handsome row of houses called Pelham Crescent. A liveried servant came out and took his horse, while he entered what was obviously his own residence. He had returned only half-an-hour before dinner, and had only time to dress for that all-important meal. As he went down to the dining-room, he muttered with a half cynical smile:

"It is a fortunate circumstance, my dear nephew, that you have somebody to take care of you, or you would play the fool as others have done."

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Clinton had voluntarily been the cause of banishing his nephew Frank to Germany, placing him in a merchant's office in Berlin, he hated being alone. He therefore sat down to dinner that evening in a very bad humour. Dinner never waited for anybody in Mr. Clinton's house; that gentleman had never been known to be late. At length, full of excuses and apologies, flushed, and undoubtedly not so calm as usual, Frank hurried in.

"So, so!" exclaimed Mr. Clinton. "Welcome, sir; I hope you have not inconvenienced yourself by your haste?"

"I was delayed," began Frank, confusedly splashing some water into a tumbler.

"Oh, indeed," said his uncle, sarcastically. "Well, presently I wish to have some conversation with you on a certain matter."

Frank Ireston glanced uneasily across the table. But the stern eyes were bent on the silver epergne glittering between himself and his uncle. Mr. Clinton did not choose to speak until the sedate old butler had completely disappeared. Then he looked searchingly at the young man whose self-conscious face betrayed secrets under this inspection.

"You leave me to-morrow, my dear boy, therefore time is short. Of course, I take the strongest possible interest in your future, and I cannot allow you to fool away a life that may be

bright and prosperous. I have made you no promises as to what I may do for you."

"Uncle Philip!"

"I want you to help yourself," coolly proceeded Mr. Clinton, disregarding this interruption. "You will go into a house which has every chance to offer you. But, mark me, you must not play the fool by a poor, if not disgraceful marriage!"

"Sir—uncle!" stammered Frank, amazed by this unexpected attack.

"I understand that you have been—I suppose flirting—with a girl in this neighbourhood—a poor girl. I hope there is nothing worse; I hope and trust you have not promised to marry this—"

"I did not intend to deceive you, sir," said Frank, recovering his self-possession. "I love the girl to whom I suppose you refer. This evening I asked her to marry me."

"Well?"

"And she has promised to do so?"

A dead silence ensued for a few minutes. Mr. Clinton rose, walked to the chimney-piece, returned to his chair, then, having mused with knitted brows for some seconds, quietly lighted a cigar.

"I will not quarrel with you, Frank," he said, in a calm voice. "But if you ruin your prospects, and discredit our family by such a match, I will have nothing more to do with your affairs. If you lose my favour, you have nothing but your own entirely unaided efforts to rely upon. I had hoped that you would make a good marriage. I named to you a girl who has a handsome fortune, and as you said neither yes nor nay, I imagined you were not averse to my negotiating the matter. Mark me. As you are leaving England for an indefinite time it will be an excellent opportunity of ending a folly which will simply ruin you. I do not speak in displeasure. I know what a young man's folly is. Once"—his voice suddenly faltered—"once, I, too, played the fool. I was dazzled by a girl's face, and believed a girl's false words, and would have married—for love. But, I will tell you the truth, she jilted me to marry a man who was able to offer all that girls covet. I don't blame her now, though I cursed her and hers at the time."

Mr. Clinton rose as he uttered these last words, and quitted the room, without giving his nephew a chance of making the slightest reply. Frank did not see his uncle until breakfast the next morning, and then not the least reference was made to the subject of disagreement. By the afternoon the young man was gone, on his journey to Berlin, with a sad heart.

CHAPTER III.

MR. CLINTON had been a shopkeeper in a large way of business in London. He had realised a respectable fortune, and retired. His only sister's only son, who had lived with him since a boy, was the sole object on which he could fix his affections, and he was resolved to leave nothing undone to make him happy and prosperous.

He did not know even the name of the girl whom Frank had avowed he meant to marry, and had seen her once only, on the evening when he had watched the lovers sauntering. But he judged by her home, and by the extreme simplicity of her dress, that she must be poor, and he had already determined on a match for Frank which was advantageous in the highest degree. He resolved to know the entire history of the young man's acquaintance with the girl who lived in the tiny rose-covered cottage, and went the shortest way to gain his object by writing to London for a private detective.

The detective came, heard as much as Mr. Clinton had to tell, pattered about idly for a few days, dawdling about the town, about the green lanes, among the fishermen, then returned to Mr. Clinton with a minute report, calmly business-like.

The girl's name was Jannette Verity. Her father had been a draper in the town of

Hastings, but had failed for a large amount some months before his death—he had, in fact, put an end to his own life, under the pressure of his troubles.

His wife had died some months later, from grief and trouble. Miss Verity had been living with her maternal grandmother since her childhood. The old lady's scanty income was derived from some house property in Crowhurst.

Mr. Clinton listened with an unruffled face, but a tornado of anger in his heart. In the calmest tone, however, he gave the man further instructions. Miss Verity was expecting letters from Berlin; he required that these letters should not reach her, but should be brought to himself.

The detective bowed. His name was Perkins, he was silent and discreet, never looked or felt surprised, and he never made remarks. In two days Perkins brought a letter. Mr. Clinton coolly opened and read it.

There had evidently been one before it, but this contained nothing more interesting than long descriptions of people and places, and ardent protestations of affection. Mr. Clinton sniffed a sniff of displeasure, and lighting the foreign sheets of paper with a vesuvian, flung them in a blazing heap on the fender, there to consume away.

Then he ordered Perkins to remain at his post until further instructions, and to bring him all other letters from Berlin addressed to Miss Verity. Perkins had bribed the postman, a poor fellow not "passing rich" on sixteen shillings a week, who had a sickly wife and five children.

Mr. Clinton sent privately to Berlin to have Miss Verity's letters intercepted there, and a day or two later one reached him, which he read, and destroyed. However, with all this bold play, Mr. Clinton did not clearly know what course he should eventually pursue.

His chief object was to create, if possible, a misunderstanding and estrangement between the lovers; but what was to be done to effectually end what he regarded as a disgraceful piece of misconduct on his nephew's part, he could not easily plan.

Full of all kinds of schemes and plots, he was slowly riding in the direction of St. Leonard's, beneath the shadow of the great black rocks, followed by his magnificent retriever dog, Jasper. Suddenly his unprofitable reflections were broken in upon by a cry of alarm.

Turning, he saw a beautiful young girl standing in an attitude of some affright, faced by Jasper, who was trying to bully her, and pretending to bar her sight of way with his most pugnacious air.

"Down, sir! Down, you rascal," cried Mr. Clinton, severely.

But the girl was trembling with alarm and he was obliged to dismount.

"Are you frightened?" he asked, going up to her.

She raised her lovely innocent blue eyes, full of purple shadows and mysterious depths, and looked at him, saying in a soft, pathetic voice:

"Not much, sir."

Mr. Clinton remained as if spell-bound, gazing at her with an incomprehensible expression—amazement, fear, intense yearning. He seemed unable to speak or move. Jannette Verity drew back with some dignity, making him conscious of the oddity of his behaviour.

Not daring to trust himself to utter a word, he raised his hat abruptly, and re-mounting, rode off, followed by Jasper. The young girl swiftly walked away in the opposite direction, hardly recovered from her agitation, which had been increased by the stranger's conduct.

"Who is she? A spirit from the dead?" Mr. Clinton said, half-aloud, as he slackened rein and glanced around him. "Her face, her look, her voice—herself. What a dolt I must have been not to try to obtain her name. Who can she be? My lost love herself, as I first saw her. It is like a vision of the past. Great heavens, I

am perfectly unnerve. I must find out who she is. She must live near this—but perhaps she is only staying here."

Thus ran his disordered thoughts. The face of this girl haunted him, her musical voice echoed in his ears. Even in his dreams, like some sweet infatuation, her figure floated before him, the intonation of her voice breathed softly into his heart, although he had heard only three words from her lips.

Every day he rode out in the same direction, always at the same hour. Every day he saw the same beautiful, gentle creature who had so fatally risen before him; but not once could he summon courage to address her, only venturing a look of interest in response to the shy smile she gave him.

Each day he hated himself for his folly in not ascertaining who she was. Not once did he imagine that she was Jannette Verity, the girl whom he had forbidden his nephew to marry. The one evening when he had seen Frank with Jannette he had caught only a glimpse of her figure, without seeing her face, and fancied she was quite a different person.

"I must crush this boyish nonsense," he said to himself. "I will go that road no more."

He felt thoroughly ashamed of letting a past sentiment again make him captive. It was absurd to ride every day for the sake of a glance at the shadow of his old lost love. He dared not trust the secret of this boy's dream to his obedient slave Perkins.

Some feeling he did not choose to avow, hardly confessed to himself, kept him tongue-tied. Otherwise he would have learnt this girl's name within a few hours. Thoroughly out of humour with himself, he prepared to visit Mrs. Merriton. He hoped to be able to either bribe or bully the lady.

As he was going out a telegram was handed to him. It came from the manager of the house of business in Berlin, informing him that Frank had slipped down a steep flight of stairs in the warehouse, and had so seriously sprained his right arm that he was confined to bed.

What would have been direful news at another time to Mr. Clinton was not altogether unwelcome now. He went down to the post-office, and telegraphed back that no expense was to be spared on Frank's account, and that he was to be kept as free from anxiety as possible. Then he pursued his way reluctantly to Mrs. Merriton's cottage.

CHAPTER IV.

A TALL, strong young country woman, of about twenty years of age, round of arm and ruddy of face, answered Mr. Clinton's sharp, authoritative rap at the door.

"Great heavens!" he thought, staring aghast at her, eyeing her not uncomely form, "can Frank be mad enough to care to desperation for such a being as this—to be ready to accept ruin itself rather than give her up?"

Mrs. Merriton was at home, and he was invited into the neat, faultlessly clean parlour. A delicious scent of roses filled the whole house with perfume. The old lady was a tall, stately personage, pale and interesting, occupied in knitting some white fleecy wrap. She rose with the dignity of a queen when the strange gentleman appeared, stooping his head as he entered. Mr. Clinton was ready with an excuse for this visit.

"He understood that she wished to part with some of her small houses at Crowhurst, and a friend of his was desirous of purchasing them."

Mrs. Merriton was surprised, but the excuse seemed a plausible one, and nobody could be more agreeable than Mr. Clinton when he chose. By degrees the conversation glided into pleasant channels, and the old lady felt as if she had gained a new friend.

Mr. Clinton carefully avoided mentioning the real object of his visit, but managed to discover that he knew some friend of Mrs. Merriton's, whose name served as a legitimate introduction. Then he went away, Mrs. Merriton herself

attending him to the door, although she was slightly lame, and might readily have excused herself from showing so much courtesy.

The stately presence of this dignified old lady changed the aspect of this little dwelling in Mr. Clinton's eyes. As he closed the small gate he involuntarily raised his hat to Mrs. Merriton, who smiled and curtsied in an old-fashioned way.

"I could almost have forgiven Master Frank if he had fallen in love with the grandmother," said Mr. Clinton to himself. "But the girl—the fellow must be mad. The girl is a perfect horror. If she had twenty thousand pounds as her dowry she would still be unendurable. And the girl I found for him is handsome, clever, rich and has a train of influential relatives at her beck and call."

A short distance from the house he unexpectedly met the fair, graceful creature who had so strangely brought back the image of his early love—the girl who haunted his thoughts, his dreams. She was advancing slowly towards him under overarching leaves, down a narrow, picturesque lane.

Her marvellous resemblance to his false love had never been so strikingly marked as at that moment. His memory rushed back to a day like this, when he had met that faithless love in a pretty country lane far away. Twenty years melted away, and he advanced to meet Jannette as if he moved in a dream.

Drawn towards her by some unexplainable mesmeric influence, he looked at Jannette so steadfastly, so earnestly, that the ready roses tints flew to her face. He addressed her as if he had known her for any length of time, and she, unaware of his identity, though acquainted with him from what seemed accidental meetings, and bound by courtesy to answer, timidly replied.

Those innocent blue eyes, unwitting of harm or guile, clear and open as those of a child, with a pathetic, appealing expression in their translucent depths, were raised with angelic confidence to meet his gaze. Philip Clinton's frozen heart melted in the soft sunshine of the rays beaming from an unclouded soul.

No longer did he argue with himself against what he had regarded as boyish folly. Unhappily, like a child joyously building a house of gaily-painted cards, he began to plan out a future life for himself. With the unreasonable want of forethought so often observable in those under the influence of the master passion, he never paused to ask himself if there might already exist some favoured lover, or if it were possible this girl might have given her troth. For the next few days he watched anxiously for her, but failed to see anything of the light flitting figure, the half sad, half smiling face, the lovely, luminous eyes, that distracted his thoughts.

By accident, Jannette had altered her customary walk. To her restless, worried heart the old familiar places were losing their pleasant charm. Every spot heretofore so dear was already haunted by a shadow of cold, indefinable fear. Instead of walking towards the West Hill, she diverted her rambles to the East Cliff, ignorant that she thus withdrew the sunshine from another's daily life.

Even while thus absorbed by the enthralling interest which had sprung up to allure him, Philip Clinton did not forget his nephew's affairs. Each day he made some excuse to visit Mrs. Merriton, viewing with increased aversion the stout, hearty young woman with the rough voice and bad grammar who opened the door.

By degrees he approached the subject of Frank, and by degrees succeeded in imbuing Mrs. Merriton with the conviction that it would be her duty to prevent any marriage between Frank Ireton and her granddaughter. He sedulously concealed his own relationship to the young man, however, representing himself as merely "an old friend of the family."

The idea of Frank's marrying Miss Verity had been bad enough before, but now that he believed he knew what species of girl she was, it had become perfectly abhorrent to him. The account of Frank's condition, sent by the doctor,

grew more grave day by day. Symptoms of fever had set in. The doctor said the young man was suffering from some mental anxiety which he would not reveal, but which retarded his recovery.

Mr. Clinton felt irritated and worried. Two powerful currents of feeling drove him in two diametrically opposite directions. He wished to go to his nephew, and, when the young man was better, to carry him off to the East, to Spain, anywhere to save him from a lingering illness, and from his detestable engagement. But he could not endure to quit the place haunted by the beautiful girl who had become queen of his heart.

Pondering over these broken threads of fate, trying in vain to disentangle them, he walked out, along by the West Hill. The solitude was singularly profound. Not a human being, scarcely a passing sea-bird, was in sight. The solemn lap lap of the golden-tinted waves alone broke the unusual silence.

Philip Clinton sat down on the fallen trunk of a tree, painfully pre-occupied; his mind distracted with sweet and bitter thoughts. Lying almost at his feet he noticed a small book, which he picked up. It was a well-read copy of Scott's poetical works, bound in gay colours, as if meant for a gift-book. For a moment, a thrill ran through his heart. Once he had bought just such a volume as this to give to his first love. With some reluctance he opened it.

On the fly-leaf was written in pencil "Jannette Verity." The idea of stout Miss Verity, of the ruddy cheeks and vacant eyes, owning Scott's poems, and leaving her book by the roadside, was so droll that Mr. Clinton laughed aloud. He made the discovery a fresh excuse for calling at the cottage. Mrs. Merriton happened to be in the little garden as he approached, and he at once gave her the book.

"It is my granddaughter's book," said the old lady. "It belonged to her poor mother. I cannot imagine how she can have been so careless as to lose it. She will be very pleased when she knows you have found it. It is strange she has never happened to see you, Mr. Clinton, but it has always happened that she has been out when you have called."

Mr. Clinton looked at her, astonished by these words. His impression had been that the proud old lady was ashamed of her plebeian grandchild, and had preferred to ignore her, as more fit for the kitchen than the parlour. As he so cordially disliked the young woman he had never attempted to encourage an acquaintance.

"Are you not in error, do I comprehend you?" he began.

But Mrs. Merriton did not catch his words. She cried:

"Here is my granddaughter, sir. Let her thank you herself."

And as she spoke Jannette opened the gate. Mr. Clinton turned hastily as the latch clicked.

"Is this young lady your granddaughter?" he stammered, "I thought—"

But what he thought he happily left unuttered, nor did Mrs. Merriton ever know that the young woman who "came in to help" in the domestic work had been mistaken for her peerless Jannette. Mr. Clinton accepted the invitation to enter the cottage, for he was resolved to unravel the mystery of Jannette's singular resemblance to his lost love, and eagerly desirous of gaining further acquaintance.

Jannette left him for some minutes alone with her grandmother, when he took the opportunity of asking Mrs. Merriton some direct questions. He began by a few discreetly worded inquiries about the young girl's mother, whom he said he fancied he had known, but could hardly remember if her name was really Verity.

"My daughter's maiden name was Allanson—Ada Allanson," said Mrs. Merriton.

But to her dismay Mr. Clinton started up wildly, and paced to and fro excitedly. It was enough. This girl was the daughter of the

woman whom he had loved, not wisely, but too well, in the past. Becoming calmer, he explained to the old lady why he felt so painful an interest in her revelation. Mrs. Merriton had never seen him in the olden days, for it was during a visit to a friend that Ada had met him and accepted his offers of marriage, writing to inform her mother of every detail.

It was just before going to visit her mother that Philip had been so cruelly jilted. The man for whom Ada had so heartlessly thrown him aside had squandered a fortune and died, leaving her penniless.

She had then married Mr. Verity, thus changing her name. Her mother married again about the same time, and thus the chance of identifying her by a familiar name was lost. Jannette's return ended the confidential conversation. The poor girl was like some drooping lily, but looked more pathetically lovely than when in the bloom of health and happiness.

Philip Clinton readily stayed to share the frugal little meal laid for the evening. If possible, he was more madly in love with the girl than he had been before. Even the knowledge that she was the promised wife of his nephew did not deter him from the resolve to gain her for himself.

"It is only a boy and girl affair," he thought. "They will forget."

And he did not choose to remember that just such another traitor as he was seeking to become had blighted his own life. The crust of cold years was broken, and his heart was young again. He visited the cottage every day; he gained the full approval of Mrs. Merriton, and tried to load both Jannette and her grandmother with costly gifts; but it was in vain that he pressed an ardent suit on the girl.

Poor Jannette had ceased to write to Frank, only waiting with dull despair for a sign from him. No sign came. No matter, she said to herself. She loved the memory of those old days (only a few weeks old) better than the kindest affection anyone else could give her.

"He must be ill," she whispered to herself, "or there is some good reason why he does not write. I will never believe he is untrue to me."

The only favour she would consent to accept from her new suitor was the occasional loan of books. Flowers, fruit, and other offerings she steadily refused.

CHAPTER V.

"He must be ill," Jannette kept repeating to herself, sitting on the edge of a rock, Frank's first letter in her hands. She had been weeping bitterly, and sat in a listless attitude of despair. Hope seemed dying.

"It pains me to see you look so sad, my child," said a soft, kindly voice, so close that she started, with a cry—with something of the feeling that leads a lost child to retreat, yet hold out its hands trustfully to the first tones that ring of sympathy. Jannette looked up. She had felt so utterly alone in the world. An awful silence lay between herself and her absent love like a sharp sword. Her grandmother was kind, but the old forget as surely the warm feelings of their youth, as ardent youth forgets the days of childhood. The echo of this kind voice was like dew to the parched flowers.

Philip Clinton had been watching her for some time. As the blue eyes, swimming in tears, turned to him, he crept nearer, and gently took one of her white hands—the pretty hand in the lace mittens, which Frank had so often kissed, with leave and without leave, with reason and without reason.

"You are unhappy," the soft voice went on. "Tell me. Can you trust me?"

Jannette snatched away her hand, hurriedly folded up Frank's letter, and placed the thin sheets, half crushed, in a velvet pocket hanging by her side. She did not know that Mr. Clinton was in any way aware of the existence of Frank, for Mrs. Merriton had never spoken of the little confidences reposed in her by her portly visitor. Mrs. Merriton was one of the people who

imagine they must be wise because they are old. She was very kind, but she might have sympathised as much with the veriest stranger as with the only daughter of her own only child.

At that moment Philip Clinton seemed the one only friend left in all the world to Jannette. But friendship and love are as antagonistic as fire and water. Mr. Clinton saw only the tears, the girlish shrinking, the varying colour on the face that might have haunted a poet's dream.

"It is only a boy and girl affair," he kept repeating to himself.

With affected sympathy, by slow degrees, he drew the details of her sad story from the young girl. It seemed so terrible to her; nobody could ever have suffered such agonising despair before. He managed to regain the little hand so rudely snatched away; he gained the other, and then tenderly kissed both. The sun was shining, the slow, slumberous sea was rolling lazily to and fro, the lovely azure sky above breathed of peace—of love. It was a day to remember, and a day to forget.

"Come to me," whispered Philip Clinton. "I will surround you with luxury. With me you shall reign as a queen. Spurn those who trifle with you. I will shield you from all care. You will have but to breathe a wish, and it shall be fulfilled in a moment."

The absent, say the proverb, are always in the wrong. For a few brief instants, pride, love, resentment, ambition, mortification, ranged themselves against an absent lover. Jannette's hands, clasped by the eager suitor who pleaded his cause, trembled. Then, as the needle surely turns to the magnet, her woman's nature rose in defiance of the tempter.

"If I cannot marry my own true love," she said, a tremulous smile rippling over her pale lips, "I will never marry at all. I must go home quickly. You are very kind, sir. My dear love is not faithless. I love him, and him alone. It would be wrong to say I could return the love you say you bear for me, while my heart is full of another."

They both stood up. But Philip Clinton saw with alarm that the tide had risen while they had been absorbed in this painful, bitter-sweet conversation. Jannette, startled by his glance, looked at the waters. It was but too evident. She shrank back, terrified, the water surrounded them.

"Oh, it is dreadful," she cried. "Can we escape?"

Philip Clinton set his teeth. He could not answer. Every moment the waters rose higher, already it was splashing about their feet. With a desperate fear, he glanced about. Jannette stood calm and firm; her face was ashy white, but she uttered no cry, no moan. As they stood thus, every instant seeming an hour, a sharp, rapid barking sounded a little way above them, and Jasper, Mr. Clinton's big retriever, appeared, eager, panting, his red tongue lolling up. The intelligent brute ran down as his master whistled.

His feet splashed in the water as he descended, and he looked anxiously at his master, as he half walked, half swam towards him, breasting the waves. The natural terror of facing death had already partly overcome Jannette's courage. She was clinging to Philip Clinton's arm, gazing affrightedly at the sullen, roaring waves. Unhappily, Mr. Clinton was a bad swimmer. It would be a question if he could save himself, to try to help another would mean certain death for both.

He flung off his coat, and rapidly divested himself of his boots, then spoke a few words to Jasper, and made some signs. The splendid creature listened with almost human intelligence. Mr. Clinton quickly implored Jannette to trust herself to him, and in a few moments Jasper was swimming to shore, dragging the almost insensible girl with him. No human being could have returned the way the dog had descended.

With difficulty Philip Clinton swam to shore. He found Jannette lying in a dead faint, Jasper standing by her, occasionally shaking the wet from his glossy coat. Mr. Clinton shouted for

help, and his sonorous voice brought two stalwart young fishermen to the spot.

They stared aghast at the beautiful girl lying on the strand, but Mr. Clinton quickly explained matters, and they lifted her as if she had been a child, and carried her to their little cottage, which lay under a jutting piece of rock. The wife of one young fellow met the party at the door.

At a glance she saw what had happened, and without a useless waste of words, led the way to a neat bedchamber, where the still insensible Jannette was laid. The young fisherwoman's ready skill soon brought Jannette to her senses. One of the men was sent by Mr. Clinton to Pelham Crescent, for that gentleman's carriage, a coat and other necessities.

The other man went to tell Mrs. Merriton what had occurred. The stout servant belonging to the old lady speedily brought a change of garments, and Mr. Clinton's carriage soon came. Mr. Clinton bestowed a handsome gift on the honest fisher people who had come to the rescue at the last moment. He then took Jannette to her home in his carriage.

All hope of winning her love had vanished, but he profoundly revered the girl who had resisted temptation, who had bravely refused to give up her true love for the most alluring future. As he placed her in the arms of her terrified grandmother, who came to the door of the cottage to meet them, he kissed her pretty, trembling fingers, and took what was almost a farewell look at her pale face.

"It has been a terrible day," he said to Mrs. Merriton. "I trust the poor child will not be ill in consequence of the shock."

Jannette did not fall ill. She was obliged to stay at home for a few days, being in a low, nervous state, but after that she wandered about much as before. It seemed to her as if she moved in a dream. No longer did she try to reason about Frank's strange silence. Sometimes she regretted, with wild despair, that Mr. Clinton had succeeded in rescuing her from death.

When she encountered Philip Clinton, she no longer regarded him with a pathetic smile, but with eyes downcast. She appeared frozen like a beautiful statue. He ceased to make any attempt to urge what was a useless suit, although he still visited her grandmother, and gave her presents of fruit and flowers.

Every day, poor Jannette grew paler and thinner. She tried to brace herself up, but despair was eating into her heart. With noble trust, she did not believe her lover false. Something must have happened. But what had happened?

CHAPTER VI.

In his sad exile, Frank was but the ghost of his former self. The worry and anxiety he had suffered had, so the doctor feared, induced a low fever.

At length his state became so serious that it was considered necessary to ask his uncle to come. That gentleman obeyed the second summons with a guilty, troubled conscience. He travelled with all speed until he reached the bedside of the poor young fellow whom he had already wronged.

By the time Mr. Clinton arrived Frank was delirious. As he sat by him holding the burning fingers within his own trembling hand, Philip Clinton almost wept tears of remorse and mortification. His dead sister seemed to ask how he had guarded her boy. As Frank tossed from side to side, only one name was on his lips—"Jannette!"

Each time he uttered a wailing cry for her his voice vibrated through his uncle's heart. A terrible fight for good or for evil was fought out in Philip Clinton's soul. But in the end his better angel triumphed.

"Who is it he so constantly asks for?" inquired the physician, though he very shrewdly guessed, and indeed had clearly divined the cause of his patient's constant agitation of mind. "I think if it were possible she could

come hither, her presence might have a wonderful effect in calming him."

Mr. Clinton resolved to make a grand sacrifice in atonement for his late treachery. He telegraphed to Mrs. Merriton, asking her to let Jannette come, to be attended by his house-keeper.

Mrs. Merriton at once consented. The message was to poor Jannette like one brought by an angel. She had so confidently believed Frank was ill, that the news did not surprise or alarm her. Mrs. Roberts, the housekeeper, happened to have guessed the little love story, having many times seen the lovers walking together in the lanes and on the beach, so she was not surprised by her commission.

The day when Jannette arrived and stood in the sick-room, Frank was beginning to recover his senses. The first object he beheld, faintly calling her name, and languidly opening his eyes, was his beloved.

"You must be quite calm, and not allow Frank to excite himself, or the doctor says he must banish you," said Mr. Clinton.

Jannette leaned over her lover and kissed his pale lips. Tranquilised, he smiled, and almost immediately fell into a slumber. From that hour he rapidly began to rally his wasted forces, and soon was able to get about, aided by Jannette and his penitent uncle. Philip Clinton felt he could not long endure this daily companionship with the beautiful young girl.

"When you are well and strong," he said to Frank, "you shall marry Miss Verity. I no longer oppose the marriage as your heart is so steadily fixed upon it."

Thus bribed, Frank rapidly regained health and strength. His uncle bought a junior partnership for him in the house at Berlin, and before the end of the year the wedding was to take place. In the meantime they returned to Hastings for a few months.

By a few judiciously worded remarks Mr. Clinton explained away the effect of the words he had spoken to Mrs. Merriton regarding Frank, and readily regained her lost favour for him. He saw very little of either the old lady or her granddaughter during those slowly dragging months. Had he been able to do so he would have left England at once, but he felt he could not leave his poor nephew even to such pleasant companionship.

The wedding, a very quiet one, once over, he quitted home for a long straggling visit to Spain and to the East. He had to fight a hard battle against his own heart, and the sad yearnings which clung about him. But in the end the good fight was won. He became tranquil, his old self conquered.

And at last he by what people call chance won the love of a beautiful Spanish girl. For her he could never feel the deep, strange passion that had twice promised to make life a delicious romance, but she brightened his home. Calm content rewarded him, and banished the cankering bitterness which had once filled his heart and blinded his eyes.

Mrs. Ireton never betrayed the secret of his suit, even in her most confidential talks with her husband. Frank never knew why his uncle so suddenly withdrew all opposition to the marriage once so abhorrent. But when a man is perfectly happy he is apt not to trouble himself about whys and wherefores. N.

ARTISTIC HOMES.

We have received "Artistic Homes, or How to Furnish with Taste." The object of the author—to supply in a succinct and readable form, useful hints as to the tasteful furnishing of the homes of our middle class—has been cleverly achieved. Has the author seen that most perfect conception and realisation of a home of taste at No. 9, Melbury-road, W., where Mr. William Burges has carried out with transcendently good effect his own ideas of what an artistic and domestic residence should be? It is a liberal education to an art student to walk

through his rooms. The guest chamber, or golden room, looks like a bit out of the Arabian Nights Entertainments" with its golden washing-stand and toilet-table enriched with crystals, gems, and the shells known as Venus's ears. There is nothing more exquisitely beautiful to be seen in London than the art of this matchless house.

The author evidently understands the principles of true taste, and in consecutive chapters treats exhaustively and comprehensively of primary and secondary colours, the effect upon the eye, simultaneous contrast, juxtaposition, and proportions of colours, decorations of walls and ceilings, wainscoting, paperhangings and their designs, the ceiling, floor coverings, carpets opaque windows, blinds, curtains, gas-fittings, lamps, furniture and its arrangement in the several rooms, pictures, window and garden boxes, and floral decorations. Decorative glass, china, and electro-plate are also touched upon. —Published by Ward, Lock & Co. Price 1s.

ONLY A PENNY.

THE following anecdote illustrates how money by changing hands accomplishes so much: A singular financial transaction occurred lately in an office. By some means or other it happened that the office boy owed one of the clerks three-pence, the clerk owed the cashier twopence, and the cashier owed the office boy twopence. One day last week the office boy, having a penny in his pocket, concluded to diminish his debt, and therefore handed it over to the clerk, who, in turn, paid half of his debt by giving it to the cashier. The latter handed it back to the boy, saying that he only owed him one penny. The office boy again passed the penny to the clerk, who passed it to the cashier, who passed it back to the boy, and the boy discharged his entire debt by handing it to the clerk, thereby squaring all accounts. Thus it may be seen how great is the benefit to be derived from a single penny.

TIME'S REVENGE;

OR,

FOILED AT THE LAST.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

REAPING THE HARVEST.

"It is hard for Lady Allenby," said Beattie, with some emotion, her beautiful dark eyes full of a strange mingling of compassion and laughter. "Could I not spare her something, if, as you say, I am owner of thousands and thousands a year? After all—"

"My dear Miss Allenby," Mr. Fielding replied, "it is useless to ask me. Neither you nor I can do anything. Neither you nor I have the slightest control over all this money. It is idle to talk about it. If you wish Lady Allenby to live with you—" Beattie drew back, shudderingly, a cloud of displeasure passing over her face. "My dear, you will not be compelled to do anything you do not like. I don't suppose there is another young lady of your age and station in the three kingdoms so untrammelled. You can do as you please, go where you please, live where you like—"

"It seems amazing," said Beattie. Then a vivid blush rose on her face. "I ought to tell you, sir, that I—I have—"

"Engaged yourself, eh?" said Mr. Fielding, seeing that she was unable to proceed. "Well, I hardly know what to say to that. It is early days, when your father has not been dead a fortnight."

"Perhaps it was very foolish—or very wrong," stammered the young girl. "But it happened all in a minute—"

"Ah, but, dear child, these things should be calmly considered," said the old gentleman. "You ought to have consulted your friends—you ought—"

"The few friends I have would be delighted to know," cried Beattie. "I have only three friends in all the world, without counting him, you know—"

"Only three friends?"

"My aunt, Miss Ibbotson, you know—and she will be married in a week or two, and go away—and my cousin, Miss Lascelles, and Miss Rochester—I count her as a friend."

"Tell me the name of—"

"Mr. Darvill—Percy Darvill," said Beattie, the flush coming to her cheeks again.

"Darvill—Darvill. I do not know him. But, my dear, you will be obliged to ask the Lord Chancellor's permission to marry. Of course you cannot marry for about a year, in any case, in respect to your father's memory."

"I know. But what do you mean by asking leave of the Lord Chancellor? I don't understand."

"Probably not. But allow me to remind you that you are a young lady of property, and people are obliged to look after you and your interests. I think I must interview this Mr. Darvill. How long have you been engaged?"

Beattie twisted a diamond ring round on her "engaged" finger.

"Three days," she said.

"Um. I trust this gentleman is not mercenary in his views?"

"Mr. Fielding!" angrily flashed Miss Allenby.

"Ah, my dear child, it is all very well—but young ladies in love are apt to see things through rose-coloured spectacles. How long have you known this gentleman?"

"Always. At least, as long as I can remember."

"Ah—um. Did your aunt know there was any little feeling of affection, or—"

"She liked him very much, and I am sure she will be very much pleased to know I am engaged to him."

"Ah, well, that is something. When and where could I see him? Does he live in London or in the country? Who and what is he? I am afraid this little affair has been rather rashly entered on. But we shall see—we shall see. I am compelled to return to London immediately, but shall return in a day or two. Come, you have not answered my questions."

Beattie rapidly gave him a glowing account of Percy, to which he quietly listened, with a smile. Then, without making any comment, he asked:

"And what do you wish to do now? Will you stay here, or—say what you wish."

"Will Lady Allenby stay here?" asked Beattie.

"She will remain as long as there is any real necessity for her to do so," replied Mr. Fielding. "No doubt she will make up her mind in a few weeks what course she will adopt."

"May I go to Miss Rochester's house?" timidly asked Miss Allenby.

"Certainly, if you wish it. If you should desire to know anything, or need any information, write or telegraph to me. Here is my address in London," Mr. Fielding said, giving her a card. "You can draw on me for any money you require."

"If I want to give any money to anyone may I have it?" inquired Beattie.

"To whom would you wish to give money, and what would be the probable amount you would require?" suspiciously asked Mr. Fielding.

"My cousin Fay—Miss Lascelles is—is I believe, very poor—I mean—"

"I do not like you to give money, but, however, you can do as you please, so long as you exercise a due moderation. Would twenty pounds be enough?"

"Oh, yes," joyfully cried Beattie, who had never possessed a fifth part of the sum in her life. "If she would come, might I ask her to pay me a visit?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, I forgot; I have already asked her to come, and to go with me and Miss Rochester to Italy," rather confusedly said Beattie. "But I did not know then that I must not do anything without asking leave, and Miss Rochester said it was right, so—"

"Very well. But I should like to know something of this young lady."

"Oh, Fayette! Why, Fayette is a hundred times better than I am, and twice as nice-looking, and so good and kind. I never saw Fayette out of temper, and—"

"Ha, ha. I shall be obliged to look up those rose-coloured spectacles of yours," said the old gentleman, smiling. "Here are bank-notes to the amount of one hundred pounds. Now, do not be extravagant, and if anybody asks you for anything send them to me."

He pressed her little hands with fatherly kindness, and went away. Beattie flew to seek Miss Rochester, who was waiting for her in the sun-lighted garden. Already Beattie was almost as fond of Miss Rochester as she had been of Fayette, and confided in her with the simplicity of a child.

Lady Allenby listened with sulky displeasure when the girls waited on her to tell her they wished to depart for a while from Altenham. Disappointed in her schemes regarding Miss Rochester, she was almost as insulting to her as she had been to Beattie.

"Do as you please," she frigidly answered.

Her ladyship was very angry when Eric carelessly informed her he was going to run up to London for a couple of days.

"What do you want there?" she crossly inquired.

"Important business," he lightly answered, "or perhaps idle pleasure, or perhaps both combined. Perhaps I want to study fossils at the British Museum or monkeys at the Zoo, or—"

"It is useless to ask you questions," said Lady Allenby, angrily. "I am left alone in my grief, my desolation."

Eric detested the little affectations and absurdities of his mother, and never took the trouble to conceal this aversion. No one was more susceptible to real suffering—perhaps no one was more intolerant of shams.

Even to himself Eric did not care to acknowledge that he was going to seek the one fair face which drew him with the irresistible force of a magnet. He did not choose to give his lady mother the slightest hint of his reasons for going off in this half-mysterious way. So when she drew out her black-edged cambric handkerchief, and shook it ostentatiously preparatory to wiping away the tears of wounded affection, he muttered a nearly audible "Pooh!"

"Be comforted, mia madre," said he. "If I go it is only that I may come back again. I should only worry and bother you if I stayed all the time."

The dinner that evening was naturally a sad and gloomy scene. Miss Rochester stayed, being earnestly persuaded to do so by Beattie; and now that it was profitless, Eric paid court to her in a fashion that irritated Sir Gerald, and faintly raised his mother's hopes.

"For," she considered, "one never knows what may happen. When I came first I made sure she was in love with Gerald."

The next day Beattie departed with Miss Rochester. She wrote a long letter to Fayette, telling her of her engagement to Percy, enclosing five pounds, and asking her to obtain leave of absence, if it were only for a week. "But," she added, "I shall come and run away with you if you do not come to me." This letter she sent to the house from which Fayette had fled. Eric also departed. Little did the poor fellow know that tricky Master Cupid, who laughs at other mortals besides locksmiths, was leading him on a wild-goose chase.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SEALED BY A KISS.

SIR GERALD ALLENBY turned over every imaginable scheme in his mind. In his darker

moods even the terrible thought of attempting Beattie's life pressed on him like some dangerous, twining serpent. But he had neither courage nor ingenuity sufficient to enable him to carry such a plot into execution.

If he could have safely poisoned, stabbed, or smothered her he would have done it, although with shrinking fear and unutterable loathing. But he not only dreaded probable punishment; he also lacked the cunning, the evil cleverness, which arranges every criminal detail with wicked calculation.

He knew it would be perfectly useless to ask Beattie for anything. Even supposing he could win back the friendly feeling, the girlish affection she had so frankly displayed, it was not in her power to give, hardly to promise anything with regard to her newly-acquired inheritance. For many reasons he regretted not having secured her affection.

Hour by hour the temptation to agree to Mrs. Lascelles' proposition grew stronger. In vain he struggled against it. Crying within his heart "I'll never consent," every effort he made to push aside the lure only enmeshed him more inextricably.

As yet he was ignorant that Beattie had accepted Percy Darvill as her betrothed lover. Acting on Jessie Rochester's advice, Beattie had not told Lady Allenby of the important step she had taken.

"She is a horrid old thing," Miss Rochester had declared, "and will be sure to make mischief. I'm awfully fond of Percy, and I'm still more awfully fond of you, Bess, my dear, and I wouldn't have anything happen to mar the course of your true love for the world. Some things are sure to happen; it always does, but we won't have extra mischief-making. It's not as if she were your own mother, you know; and I believe the proper etiquette is for Mr. Darvill to mention the matter himself. I've got a battered old Etiquette of Courtship and Marriage somewhere at home—we'll look directly we get there, and see what's the properest thing to be done on the occasion."

Sir Gerald did not, could not, believe that all hopes of winning Jessie Rochester were at an end. Without being what is ordinarily recognised as a vain or conceited man, he had a quiet, deep-seated belief in his own powers of attraction. Many times he had succeeded in winning girlish hearts, without trouble, therefore he could not be persuaded that it would be impossible to succeed now.

He did not believe that absence makes the heart grow fonder. He hoped that Miss Rochester might prove as fickle as the rest of womankind. But he cursed the fate which had snatched away Altenham when it had seemed within his grasp. Rich, he might have tempted Jessie from her absent lover; poor, the siege would be a doubtful one.

Slowly revolving painful, agitating thoughts, he rambled away from Altenham the day after the two girls had gone. Being light and alert, he was addicted to long walks. He had, too, a curious sensuous love for nature, and was no mean hand at sketching.

The air was pleasantly exhilarating. Half unconsciously, he followed the way leading to the Rochesters' place. With a yearning he had never known till now, he longed for a glance even at the only woman he had ever loved, and he fancied some accident might favour him.

As he entered a shaded lane, where the trees arched and intertwined overhead, the sound of horses' feet struck on his ear. In his present nervous state—a state well described by the popular and expressive word "unhinged"—every sound, every echo of a sound, jarred upon him with a painful force.

This man was not worth studying, any more than a noxious snake or insect is worth the well-conducted, clever, serene professor's notice; yet, at this moment, angels might have wept over a human soul in peril.

With the guilty self-consciousness of one already steeped in sin, stained with crime, looking with half-dazed eyes at the hot fires of

greater crimes and sins, Sir Gerald crept behind the bole of a great tree.

Friend or foe, he cared to meet no one now. A throbbing pain in his forehead brought to his mind, by some unpleasant train of ideas, the brand set upon Cain. He felt as if the most casual passer-by must see his thoughts.

A silvery echo of laughter, the laughter of a girl perfectly happy; oh, rare and lovely vision! filled the summer air with a delicious sweetness. In a moment, Beattie, mounted on a pretty, graceful little mare, accompanied by Percy Darvill, also on horseback, appeared in sight.

Percy Darvill's strong, firm hand was lightly laid on the rein timidly held by Beattie. Never had either of the young lovers appeared to much advantage. They were all aglow with innocent happiness.

Like most lovers, they fancied themselves alone in the world. The universe seemed created for them alone. Like the famous chancellors who imagined the sun rose every morning for the express purpose of hearing him crow, they took it for granted that nature smiled to heighten their bliss. Or, rather, they were like children, who accept benefits heaped upon them with eager, laughing glee, unconscious that any gratitude is expected.

Sir Gerald saw the state of affairs in a moment. If not already engaged, these young people were on the point of plighting their troth. He watched, unseen, the bitterest hatred, the most cankering venom, in his heart. A happy ring of laughter, a confused murmur of voices, a pause. Then Percy bent downwards, and Sir Gerald caught the words:

"When we are married you know, darling—"

And the words had scarcely been spoken, when Percy suddenly caught Miss Allenby in his arms, and kissed her with a long, lingering, passionate kiss, which told the story of a happy love more plainly than the most eloquent sentences could have narrated it.

"I'm sure I shall tumble off," cried Beattie, glowing like a rose after a summer shower.

Percy laughed. The two rode on, sublimely unconscious, as lovers always are, that anybody had witnessed this little interlude. The circle of love already surrounded the young girl like a magic ring of fire.

Sir Gerald shrank yet further into concealment. It is an unprofitable task to follow evil doers through the labyrinth of their devious thoughts. Yet nothing can be more terrible to those who pause for a moment in the modern whirl of events than to glance for an instant at the brief paragraphs in the mirrored frames of life.

Most readers look carelessly, if they look at all, through the "headings," as they are technically called. Few linger to think of each sin-stained soul named. And well that they do not turn to gaze at the evil doers.

"What does it matter?" said Sir Gerald, as he retraced his steps to Altenham. "After all, revenge is sweet. As she said, I have a moral, if not legal, hold upon her. I don't think I risk very much, and I may gain—what? Well, I can name my own terms."

Instead of going direct to Altenham, Sir Gerald went to the town and sent a telegram to Mrs. Lascelles.

"Going to Scotland. Will write in a few days."

That was all. "But, after all," he thought, struggling against his better nature, "it means nothing, it binds me to nothing."

MR. ARUNDALL was sorely puzzled. In a moment, as it were, he found himself the centre of a painful romance. Probably no middle-aged gentleman was ever more calmly prosaic than Mr. Arundell. "Regular as clockwork" is a truth spoken in jest.

Anyone acquainted with Mr. Arundell might have been almost certain of his movements at different hours of the day. He greatly disliked

being driven out of his ordinary routine. But he was singularly unselfish and ready with a grumble and a growl to sacrifice his ease, his comfort, and his money for the benefit of other people.

With almost feverish anxiety he awaited Fayette in his dim-dusty office. He had found that Miss Ibbotson had left London and travelled to Scotland, and he thought the safest course would be to take the young girl to her at once.

On her way Fayette had braced up her nerves to bear any tidings, good or ill, to be ready for any journey. But she was giddy with excitement as she stepped from the cab into the dark, dusty house of business. Elizabeth was ready for any new adventures. It was "hall as good as a play," she thought. Her strong, stout arm was very useful to the half-frightened girl she helped in alighting.

Mr. Arundell hurried Fayette into his own room, dismissed the cab, and signed to Elizabeth to follow him. All "them himperent fellars," the clerks, had gone.

"How much would you take, my good girl," he said, "to throw up your situation without warning and go with this young lady to Scotland?"

Elizabeth loosened the floodgates of her eloquence so alarmingly that Mr. Arundell almost put his fingers in his ears. Then he laughed and told her to wait. He went to Fayette, and told her that her aunt was in Scotland.

"Are you equal to undertaking the journey now?" he asked.

Unable to speak, she eagerly rose and held out her little hand.

"Come," said Mr. Arundell.

He touched his handbell, a signal to his man to bring a cab. In a few minutes he was taking Fayette and her new attendant to Euston Square. On the way he had the care to stop and buy a fur-lined cloak, and a few other necessary things for the young girl who had escaped unprovided.

"I have nothing to tell you," he said, as they drove on. "I will myself go and see this mother superior. She has said nothing beyond the mere fact that she holds a confession of the date and of the nature supposed."

Fayette was too weary to think. She resigned herself to the inevitable. The journey to Scotland was like a dream. Her powers, mental and physical, were becoming exhausted; she was becoming almost like an automaton. It was like some electric shock when as she waited in a petty little station for Mr. Arundell at the end of the journey he came to her, Aunt Prue's telegram in his hand, looking very white and worried.

"My dear," said he, "do not be alarmed, but I find I have made a serious mistake. There are two towns in this part of the country; their names are almost alike, but they are thirty miles apart. You are quite safe. I am going to find some place where we can have some breakfast, and then I must make inquiries as to the best means of reaching the place where your aunt is staying."

In about half-an-hour he came back, and signed to Fayette and her humble friend to follow him. He led the way to a pretty little village inn. A pleasant, smiling old landlady met them at the door, and took charge of the two tired girls. Presently Fayette, refreshed by splashing her face and hands in cold water, was sitting at breakfast with Mr. Arundell, Elizabeth being duly cared for in the kitchen.

"I will leave you here," said the old gentleman, "while I make inquiries. Do not be uneasy. You are quite safe."

"You are so very, very kind," murmured Fayette, the tears rising in her blue eyes.

The methodical old gentleman was ashamed of the error, although it had arisen through no fault of his own. He went away hurriedly, promising to come back as soon as possible. Fayette pressed her fingers on her aching eyelids trying to think. But a dull, aching pain in her temples warned her to desist. She rose, and idly walked to the window with languid curiosity.

A lovely scene lay without—one of those superb pictures which need the pen of a Scott or a Wordsworth to depict. A glorious morning sunlight illumined lofty mountains and green sloping vales; the fresh fragrance of the early morning rose like a solemn thanksgiving. But as Fayette looked a solitary figure slowly advanced up one of the shadowed glens and absorbed all her interest. In a moment she recognised the graceful figure and handsome face of Gerald Allenby.

A sudden feeling of joy impelled Fayette to run to meet him. It seemed as if another friend had come to her aid. For a few moments she watched as he slowly walked up the path. His head was bent down, almost touching his breast. Fayette thought he must be coming to seek her to take her to Beattie.

She was becoming so unaccustomed to surprises that nothing seemed improbable. In her present bewildered state she was hardly capable of calmly reasoning. But she fancied that perhaps he had been directed to come to this place by Mr. Arundell.

A thrill of joyous anticipation led her to imagine that Eric Armitage might be following with her old friend. From the upper window where she stood, Fayette could see Sir Gerald enter the house. The minutes wore away, but no one came to summon her.

A silence as if death reigned. Fayette moved towards the door, then softly stepped out into the narrow corridor, but still could hear no sound. The corridor was a kind of antiquated gallery, from whence could be seen what was called the coffee room.

The brilliant morning light fully illumined this chamber, while the gallery above was dark. Those above could see clearly, but no one downstairs could discern any object in the gallery without painfully straining their eyes. Sir Gerald was standing by a quaint old sideboard, leaning his elbow on this while he slowly and carefully turned over the pages of a shabby-looking book.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

"SEMIRAMIDE" has been performed for the first time this season, the chief attraction being the appearance of Madame Patti, whose greatest triumph as a vocalist is gained in "Semiramide." The great artist was, vocally and dramatically, as good as ever. With regard to the performance generally the least said the better.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

An attractive and interesting performance of "Mignon" has been produced here, and was a great success. Madame Christine Nilsson took the title character, and her achievement called for nothing but praise. She sang in her very best style, and was liberally applauded. Middle. Lehmann was an attractive Filina, her bright soprano voice, used with taste and skill, making the music always acceptable. Signor Campanini was heard to advantage as Guglielmo.

ROYAL AQUARIUM.

THERE are now on exhibition in the Annexe of the Royal Aquarium two enormous giants and a very small Chinese dwarf. The following is a description of these interesting people:—Chang, the great Chinese giant, is the largest giant in existence. He stands eight feet two inches high, and is highly educated, speaking no less than five different languages, including English. Von Henrik Brustad is the second of the giants. He is by birth a Norwegian, and extremely muscularly developed; he is about 8ft. high, twenty-four stone in weight, and the diameter of his

finger ring is one and a quarter inch. "Chenmah," the Chinese dwarf, is the smallest man in the world. He is a native of Ningpan, an island of Chan-Sing, is forty-two years old, and only twenty-five inches high. "Attila," the "modern Hercules," whose wonderful feats of strength have won for him on the Continent, in the Provinces, and in London, a high reputation for graceful and unique athletics, appears here. His previous unrivalled artistic performances have made him an acknowledged favourite.

MISS PHILIP'S CONCERT.—The annual concert by this favourite composer has been prominently recognised among the recurring features of the London musical season, and, notwithstanding unfavourable weather, a large attendance assembled at St. James's Hall, and bore testimony to the high regard in which Miss Philip is held by her professional associates as well as by a large circle of personal friends.

THE STREETS OF PARIS.

SHADE trees and small parks (each decorated with appropriate statuary or fountains) are a speciality of Paris. The streets are, generally speaking, wide, and few are at all old in appearance or very narrow. While there is not everywhere a look of newness, yet there is nowhere an appearance of great antiquity in the streets; the buildings being of light colour, a cream tint prevailing, none of red brick or one of brown stone, makes all look cheerful, if not especially modern. The remarkable cleanliness of the streets is due to the excellent drainage. In the granite kerbstones are places about eight inches square, cut down into the stone, with iron trap doors to cover. From these places a pipe three inches in diameter comes out through the kerbstones toward the gutter.

Men and women go about, and after the streets have been swept with the machines, or by the hand brooms, as the case may be, and the dirt left in the gutter, they open these places, turn on the water, and an abundant supply is afforded in the gutters. All the refuse dirt is then swept into the sewer openings. The pipes named are at proper distances apart and are everywhere to be found where their use may be demanded. The sewers are on so grand a scale that they are one of the objects of especial interest to the tourists. Through some of the principal sewers are sidewalks, and even cars for transit of the curiosity-seeking visitor, and thousands visit them annually. The supply of water is great, and the means of conveyance perfect.

THE gnats, or rather midges, this spring are unusually poisonous. Along the valley of the Thames everyone is in a state of bumps or inflammation. Most folks for a cure go to the time-honoured blue bag, but American bayrum is a safer and pleasanter remedy.

THE Empress of Russia for some weeks before her death was kept in a room which was almost hermetically sealed from the outside atmosphere and fed, so far as her lungs were concerned, upon an aërated gaseous composition in which, of course, there was more than the usual quantity of ozone. It was only by this means that she was kept alive so long as she has been.

A SCIENTIFIC American has, for some reason best known to himself, turned his attention to the tug strain that human hair will stand. He is a doctor of Michigan, and we hear on authority he estimates that the supporting power represented by the hairs on the heads of 180,000 people is equal to 2,000,000 tons, and using a larger illustration, he calculates that the hair of the heads of the entire population of the globe could hold supported in space, against the gravity of the earth, the planet Vesta, and yet have 7,000,000,000,000 tons of strength to spare.



[A COURTELY GREETING.]

HESTER.

HESTER STANLEY entered the bright, airy room where her mother and her sister, Nita, were seated at work. They were up to their eyes in work, as ladies say. Spring sewing. Hester dropped into a chair and fanned herself with a big, stray paper fan of the Japanese pattern.

"Oh, dear, I'm so tired and so hot!"

"Twenty button-holes waiting for you, my dear," quoth Nita.

"Hester, suppose you make us all some iced lemonade before you get to work," suggested Mrs. Stanley, pitying the girl's hot, flushed face and fretted expression. "Presently, that is. When you are rested."

Nita saw no great hardship in sewing. She had been chattering like a gay little magpie to her mother all the morning, pitching her voice to be heard above the buzz of her sewing-machine. But Hester hated to sew. She felt like a condemned prisoner when she was settled down to make half-a-dozen of everything and a dozen of everything else.

And this her compassionate mother knew, and worked many a button-hole and ran up many a seam for her; now, to-day, had sent her down the street to purchase buttons and spool-cotton rather than see her bright face darken and lengthen over the uncongenial task.

The expedition to town had not proved a

success. Hester had returned more fagged than ever. But the lemonade suggested acted like a charm. Hester having fanned away a portion of her ill-humour, crossed the hall into the dining-room, put three silver mugs of ancient form upon a massive silver waiter, squeezed in lemon juice on the sugar, and added ice water, which proceeded to ooze out on the outside in gracious beaded drops.

Nita drank off her libation without ceremony. Mrs. Stanley heaved a sigh a trifle weary, as she leaned back and quaffed hers slowly. Hester began to revive. She smiled; she spoke in a pleasant tone of voice. One could see that she was really not only a very graceful, stylish girl, but that she also was rather pretty; not regularly pretty, but with a charming, bright face that defied criticism.

"I met Colonel Maynard on my way to town," she said, presently.

"Who? Do you mean our cousin?"

"Well, yes. I believe he is our forty-eleventh cousin."

"As rich as Croesus," put in Nita.

"Did not his wife die about a year ago?" inquired Mrs. Stanley.

"Yes," said Hester. "I don't believe it was a very congenial marriage, do you, mamma? Was not she a very peculiar person?"

"I have always heard she was a great invalid—never walked, never saw company."

"He married her for her money, didn't he, mamma?"

"So they say. But, dear me! who can tell?"

If it was so, I have no doubt that he found it a dear bargain."

"Well"—thus Nita—"if he married his first wife for her money, there is no doubt in my mind that his second wife will marry him for his."

"I don't see why," returned Hester. "I like Colonel Maynard; I can imagine a woman liking him well enough to marry him for himself."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes—a woman of a certain age; not a young woman like myself, of course. I agree with Owen Meredith, that 'gay youth loves gay youth.'"

"It seems natural that such should be the case," said Mrs. Stanley, returning to her ruffle. "There was but a year's difference between your father and myself. We had so much in common. It was a matter of course for us to like the same things. I was nineteen when I was married; we were both too young, I am afraid."

Mrs. Stanley shook her head pensively, not sadly. She was not one of those who mourn over lost happiness. Rather she rejoiced that it had ever been hers; she looked forward to resuming it in a happier land.

"Cousin Henry—he asked me to call him, continued Hester, with a blush, "inquired for you, mamma; he said he would like to see you. He asked me whether I thought you would be at home this evening, and I said I thought you would be."

"Strange that he should be all at once seized with a desire to cultivate my acquaintance," said Mrs. Stanley, a little drily.

"I am afraid we owe his sudden friendship to Hester," laughed Nita. "If she had not made a conquest of him last night at Sheriff Ilchester's, I'm afraid he never would have resurrected mamma's image from the storied past."

"Nonsense!" Hester remarked, with decision, collecting the mugs, and marching off with them.

She returned to settle down for a quiet hour of button-holes, at the end of which time Aunt Henny put her turbaned head in at the door, to ask whether the ladies were ready for dinner.

"I've worked ten," announced Hester, jumping up, to cut the bread, take the butter off the ice and put it on the table, and ring the bell, which latter formality was as regularly indulged in as though they still had a waiter and did not follow the workings of the domestic machinery inch by inch.

Then after dinner there was the glass and silver to be washed and put away, and the dining-room to be straightened up. These duties devolved upon Hester, who was by no means a drone, although she did not like to sew. This brought her into the middle of the afternoon.

Still those ten other button-holes remained to be worked. And it was very warm, and Hester was tired, so tired that, by the time she had worked them and tossed the waist into a distant corner of the sewing-room, she could have cried. But then, she had lost sleep the night before, having been at this party at Sheriff Ilchester's.

Nevertheless, she made her afternoon toilet, putting on a clean lawn dress. Then she set the tea-table; again cut the bread, again took the butter off the ice, this time cracked the ice to put in the tea—this latter office being performed out of consideration to Aunt Henny.

Little, however, did Hester eat, having finally accomplished getting the meal together. But Nita's appetite never flagged. She had been buzz-buzzing ever since dinner at her machine, and now left it with actual reluctance. She was volubly explaining how she proposed to trim a new print dress she was making, when a carriage drove up to the door.

This was an event. There were only four carriages in Oakville; Sheriff Ilchester's rock-away, he living at the edge of the town; Mrs. Thame's, she being a great invalid, and owning the first and hitherto the last phaeton imported

into the quiet old town; and two livery stable equipages. This was one of the two—a no-top waggon.

The dining-room was at the end of the hall, and looked out upon the street. Nita peeped through the open dining-room and the blinds of the closed Venetian outer door.

"Colonel Maynard?"

"Do open the door, girls. Henny puffs and pants so coming up and downstairs."

Nita laughed.

"You will have to go, Hester. I am not in toilet. Besides, of course, he wants to see you."

Hester hesitated; longed for a servant to usher in her guest, and then hand in his card; then floated out to meet him. She led him into the dark, cool parlour, pushed open the blinds, and let in the bright sunset light, which showed the bare floor—those shabby genteel people followed the shabby genteel fashion of that part of the world, and always took up their threadbare carpets when the warm weather came, but the light also displayed respectable rows of family pictures, dim with age, and stately vases that would have filled with despair collectors of bric-a-brac; and quaintly carved chairs, and massive mantel-piece, and heavy mouldings on wall and ceiling. In a word, this ancient parlour told the whole tale. These Stanleys were of the poor and proud class.

"I have come to ask you to take a drive," Colonel Maynard said. "Will you go?"

"Oh, yes," Hester said.

A drive! This was always an event. But after the warm, fatiguing day she had passed it seemed to her that it would be a foretaste of Heaven to get a breath of country air. She started up.

"I'll get my hat," she said.

"And meanwhile may I have the pleasure of paying my respects to your mother?"

"I will tell mamma you are here," and Hester withdrew with a flowing courtesy that would have done her credit in a queen's drawing-room.

Mrs. Stanley came in presently; greeted Colonel Maynard, with her quiet, simple courtesy just as he was wondering whether all old-fashioned chairs were as hard as these.

"It has been a long while since we met, Colonel Maynard. You brought your wife here once, ten years ago. Not since then, I think."

"No, I believe not. You are looking quite well, madam."

Mrs. Stanley could not make up her mind to return the compliment. Her forty-eleven cousin looked even more than ten years older since she saw him last. He was stout; he was weather-beaten; he had lost every trace of youthful vivacity he had ever possessed; he looked heavy both as regarded mind and body. In truth, Mrs. Stanley was so impressed with this fact that it occurred to her that conversation with him would be to the last degree a labour and effort. She was debating what remark to make to him next, having thanked him for his favourable criticism without eliciting any further conversational effort on his part, when Hester returned. Colonel Maynard arose with alacrity.

"You will trust your daughter to me for an hour or so, Mrs. Stanley?"

"I hope you are a good driver," said Mrs. Stanley, her wonted motherly anxiety sharpened by the unwonted character of the expedition. A horse in Oakville was scarcely regarded as a domestic animal.

Colonel Maynard knew to the full as much about horses as about men. He took his ability to drive the most unruly steed so much for granted that he did not appreciate Mrs. Stanley's genuine apprehension in the least. He answered absently, as he put Hester into the waggon:

"A child could drive these old hacks."

Hester's eyes danced; her colour rose. This was delightful. Colonel Maynard whipped up the horses, who did their best, and bowled them out of town in fine style.

"Oh, isn't this lovely!" cried Hester.

"Would you like to drive yourself?"

"Oh, yes. May I?"

This filled her cup of bliss to overflowing. She rattled on like a talking machine. Colonel Maynard looked at her with unfeigned admiration. This gay, bright, talkative girl attracted him singularly. I suppose it was the law of contrast.

He asked a good many questions, and Hester answered them frankly. The fresh air, the motion, the novelty of the situation, made her communicative; before they returned home Colonel Maynard had found out a good deal about her. Before he left Oakville he had found out a good deal more.

The Stanleys had a great many friends; every one knew just how good they were, how poor, how cheerful and uncomplaining; although there had been times when they had been put to it to make both ends meet. It was no secret that they eked out a slender income by taking in sewing. If it was not their own spring sewing it was someone else's all the year round.

When Colonel Maynard lifted Hester out of the waggon in the moonlight, her mother and sister were sitting on the broad stone steps gossiping peacefully. A spinster neighbour had come in to sit with Mrs. Stanley; a tall young man rose from the deep shadows and advanced to shake hands with Hester.

This was Nita's adorer, who haunted the Stanleys' sitting-room in winter, their front doorsteps in summer. Nita and he had been engaged two years, and seemed to be no nearer the end of their engagement than they had been when it was first entered upon.

Dan Hyde was practising law now; he had only been admitted to the bar six months ago. It was a long way yet to that part of the ladder where he would begin to make money. Meanwhile, he and Nita were happy. Nita had a happy talent for living in the present. It was food for satisfaction for her that Dan cared for her, that she saw him every day, and that he had decided not to leave Oakville for the present.

Colonel Maynard spent an hour or so on those sociable steps. He tied the horses, and settled himself down comfortably. He liked it. He felt ten years younger. I will let you into the secret of this state of mind. He had missed his youth; he had been disappointed in his married life. Hence he had grown dull and deadened. But all the while he had capabilities of enjoyment; sitting there in the moonlight, it flashed upon him that he had many discoveries to make in the delights of life.

Glancing over at Nita and Dan, he envied that tall, good-looking young fellow with the light moustache. One could see at a glance that he and pretty Miss Stanley were lovers. Miss Nita was prettier than her sister; but all the same he preferred Hester's face. He called her Hester in thinking of her, mark. She was years younger than himself, and beside, he was her father's cousin; so why not?

A month later found him again in Oakville; more drives, more talks in the moonlight or starlight. Hester and he were very good friends by this time. He came to see her one morning, to make an engagement to ride on horseback with her that afternoon. Aunt Henny admitted him, then puffed back to the kitchen, where Hester was busy fluting the ruffles of her white dress, with a red face and hands as red.

"Oh, dear!" Hester was in a pet directly. "I've only finished the over-skirt. It's too bad. Couldn't you go on with this for me, Aunt Henny?"

"There's all my own ironin', child, and the potatoes to pare, and the rice to wash. I'm willin' to do it, if yer ma'll put back the dinner."

Hester made a grimace behind the old woman's back.

"Oh, well, if you can't you can't, and there's an end of it. But, indeed, you'll have to take a message to Mr. Maynard for me."

"It do give me shortness of breath awful bad this yer goin' up and down the stairs. Well, miss, what am I to say?"

"Tell him that I am busy, but that I'll see him in about a quarter of an hour, if he can wait that long."

Aunt Henny departed. She returned after a time.

"He says he can wait. Not to hurry yourself, miss. He can find a book."

Hester fluted, fluted. Scorching the ruffle on her sleeve; burnt her finger. But she finished her dress. Finally she ran downstairs with it, and hung it up in her room triumphantly. Then she plunged her face in a basin of cold water; looked disgustedly at it in the glass, and at her crimson hands out of the glass. But there was no help for it. She must hurry down to Colonel Maynard.

"Oh, dear, I am so warm! I thought I never should be through. I am so sorry I kept you waiting!"

"What were you doing?"

Colonel Maynard was famous for asking point-blank questions.

"Ironing—that is, fluting. Such hot work."

"Why doesn't that old woman do it for you?"

"Oh, she's old and wheezy, and has the cooking to do; besides the—other ironing. Fluting is an extra. I don't believe I shall ever be cool again."

"I'll tell you what. Let us go to the town and get some ice-cream; it is not far. Will you?"

"Oh, no—but yes, I think I will. I do like ice-cream."

So they went. Hobnobbing over a heaping saucer of vanilla cream and a bountiful plate of macaroons Hester remarked:

"I wish I could have ice-cream every day. I love sweet things, and we never have them. Bread and butter, beef and mutton, is the daily bread we are thankful for."

"Will you have some more?"

"Thank you, yes. This will be my dinner. I am becoming rapidly consoled for my scorching. Oh dear, how I hate to be poor!"

"Do you really mind it?"

"Of course I mind it. I hate to sew, Cousin Henry, and I hate to set tables and dust and iron, and to spoil my hands."

"You have such pretty hands, too. Why do you never wear rings? I thought that all young girls liked rings."

"I don't wear rings because I have none to wear. I wish I had. Goldschmidt has a lovely ring in his case—an amethyst. A great oval stone, set up on claws. Do you not love amethysts?"

"They are red stones, are they not?"

"Goodness, no. Lovely purple stones; violet colour, you know."

"Hester, let me give you that ring."

Hester looked longingly at the finger on which she pictured to herself the coveted ring.

"You are awfully good to me," she said.

"But I think not."

Having made this heroic protest she rose, solemnly helped herself to the last macaroon in the dish, which she munched with deliberation, while he paid the bill at the counter on their way out.

The next day he brought her the aforesaid ring. He had come in again in the morning; she had seated herself on an uncomfortable, backless ottoman, and had dragged a heavy, lumbering arm-chair forward for him to sit in. She was leaning forward, her arm on a table, her chin on her hand. He took a little box out of his pocket and from it a ring, which he handed to her.

"Here is your purple stone, Hester. If you won't take it as a gift, at least wear it as a loan."

She smiled, tried it on, turned it about.

"Isn't it pretty?" she said, pleased as a child. And with another smile the matter ended. Admit Colonel Maynard had reason to be encouraged.

As for Mrs. Stanley, she made no objection. She considered Colonel Maynard in the light of a fatherly relation. And Hester was her baby, her little one. She could not bring herself to imagine the possibility of anything like a love affair for a long time yet.

But in the bottom of her selfish little heart

Hester Stanley knew that Colonel Maynard by no means considered himself a fatherly relative. She knew perfectly well that he was very, very fond of her. I say that she knew this at the bottom of her selfish little heart, because she certainly was disposed to consider herself more than himself in the matter—her present advantage more than his future inconvenience. That is, he did so much for her.

He made her so comfortable; she would miss him so dreadfully. What if, day by day, that wistful look was growing in his eyes—that wistful look which she knew she never expected to satisfy? What if, day by day, he was growing to know her better, love her better?

Decidedly she was not a young woman of an exalted order of virtue. She allowed Colonel Maynard to go on and on; she trusted that things would not come to a climax—that they would still go on being friends. He came to bid her good-bye a day or two after he had given her the ring.

He rang the front-door bell; then he waited a long time in the broiling sun; a longer while than he was aware of, in fact, so absorbed was he in thoughts of her. He was going home to attend to important business, but he fully intended to be back in two weeks' time. Meanwhile, he meant to ask Hester to write to him.

He wondered would she? Yes, he hoped, he believed she would. He rang again. A slow, shuffling step finally came along the hall. Aunt Henny opened the door.

"Miss Hester?" queried Colonel Maynard, entering.

Aunt Henny did not exactly bar the way, but she hesitated.

"Miss Hester is with her ma, sir. Her ma is awful sick. Awful bad all night. The doctor's just gone."

"Aunt Henny, Aunt Henny!" a quick, agonised young voice called from above. "Oh, hurry, hot water."

Hester came speeding downstairs, her eyes aflame, her face white as a snowdrift. She had caught up a straw hat which she had tied over her loose, roughened hair. She scarcely saw Colonel Maynard, but he followed her down the steps into the street.

"Hester, what is it? Let me help you."

"Mamma, she is worse. I am going for the doctor."

"Let me go. I will go as quickly as you can. You had better stay with your mother."

He put her back into the house with gentle force. She yielded. After all it had been terrible for her to leave that pale, suffering face upstairs even for a moment.

As luck would have it, Colonel Maynard met the doctor at the first corner, and hurried him back with him; but he was too late. Mrs. Stanley's disease, an acute inflammation, had taken a suddenly unfavourable turn. She was unconscious, and her pulse had almost entirely failed when the doctor reached her bedside. So those two poor girls were left motherless.

Colonel Maynard decided to remain in the house when he returned with the doctor. An instinct warned him of impending trouble. He paced up and down the lofty, shabby drawing-room, listening anxiously for sounds above. But those poor girls were very quiet. Old Henny was the first to come downstairs.

Colonel Maynard went out to her as she shuffled down the stairs, her apron to her eyes. She told him what had happened, in a voice broken by sobs. He was greatly shocked; the catastrophe was so sudden, so awfully unexpected. After a moment's hesitation he asked the old woman to carry a line from him, presently, to Miss Hester. Only a line:

"I AM here; command me. I have a right as your kinsman to be commanded by you. I am yours most faithfully, HENRY MAYNARD."

He was a man not given to figures of speech, and Hester knew it. He had perhaps not signed himself otherwise than as "yours truly," "yours respectfully," in all his life before. And—even in the first shock and anguish of her grief—it comforted her to be assured of this

staunch and faithful friendship ready for her to lean upon.

Colonel Maynard was again pacing up and down when a pale, grief-struck face appeared in the doorway. No one could have accused him of insensibility or cold-heartedness now, as he started eagerly forward, his whole face—plain and heavy most persons called it—lighted up and redeemed by the great tenderness shining on it. He took both Hester's cold hands and kissed them, and she looked up, with a mute appeal in her eyes, into his face.

"Then you will stay and—help us?"

"Yes, I will stay and take care of you," he amended. "Poor children—poor little girl."

Hester drew away her hands, and began to cry heartbrokenly. It was well. This was one of those cases when tears relieve the intense nervous tension, and when tears do not come readily. She turned to go.

"Send for me or write to me if there is anything special you wish me to attend to," he said.

He stayed on and on after that. The girls were perfectly inexperienced, perfectly helpless. To be sure, if he had not stepped in, either the doctor or Dan Hyde would have to come forward; but he being there, these others withdrew into the middle distance. Colonel Maynard was the kind of man to whom one involuntarily gave way where anything was to be done.

He had spent a long apprenticeship in serving first one and then another. He saw Hester every day. She came to him naturally with all her cares and anxieties, and he smoothed them out for her. She utterly ceased to speculate upon how much he liked her, how much she liked him. She simply realised overwhelmingly that he was her best, and strongest, and most unselfish friend. Finally he broached the subject of the future to her.

"Hester," he said, one evening, "I must go home to-morrow. I have been deferring and deferring; but I can do so no longer."

"To-morrow? Oh, no, Cousin Henry."

"Do you really care?"

"What do you take me for? How could I help it? Care? Why, how can I do without you?"

It was twilight. She did not see the sudden light in his eyes, the sudden setting of his teeth, as of a man nerving himself for a last fatal plunge.

"Hester," he said, "it is only for you to say the word and I will never leave you. Dearest little girl, be my wife, and no power shall ever drag me away from you."

He took her hand and raised it to his lips. Hester looked up and met his anxious, wistful eyes. She said, very simply:

"Do you think I could make you happy? Are you sure you love me?"

At which he took her answer into his own hands. He put his arm round her and drew her to him.

"But I want to hear you say that you consent," he said, and Hester said yes very quietly.

Thus did she enter upon the most solemn engagement of her life. She liked him. She needed him. She did not look beyond the present. She trusted that it would be all right. For the rest, what was left for her to do?

Nita approved highly of the match. She would have deplored her sister's entering upon an engagement like her own. She considered that she and Dan represented the romantic element of the family. Hester was marrying as most girls married—sensibly and prudently. Nita accepted the situation gracefully. She also gracefully accepted Colonel Maynard's invitation to live in his house until she should have a home of her own.

They were married very quietly. The same day they went to Chestnut Hill, Colonel Maynard's home. It was a beautiful October day. Hester had chosen to make the trip from Oakville to Chestnut Hill by water. Colonel Maynard placed Nita and herself on the deck of the boat, then resting his arm on the back of Hester's chair, fell into a fit of musing.

The girls talked. The change, the fresh faces, the excitement of the day, put more life and animation into their faces and voices than they had known for weeks. Colonel Maynard did not join in their talk. Nay, presently he arose and began to walk up and down the deck.

"Now we'll have a real cosy, old-fashioned talk," Nita said, leaning up close to her sister.

Somehow the words and what had gone before struck a chill to poor Hester. Had her husband nothing to say to her? Did he prefer talking about the weather, and the crops, and the state of the currency, with those strange men yonder, to talking to her—on her wedding-day, too?

Her poor little heart turned as cold as stone. Why had he married her? Perhaps he had only married her for pity; because she was forlorn, and had no home. He was taking her to a home; he meant to take care of her, to feed her and clothe her. But beyond that there was no particular sentiment in the matter.

Her spirits gave out suddenly. She sat still and grave. Nita chatted on, regardless, however. Nita required very little encouragement to keep up a flow of conversation. Colonel Maynard, glancing, presently, noticed how still and pale Hester had grown, and they were approaching the landing where they would take the carriage for home. He crossed to his wife's side.

"There is Chestnut Hill through the trees," said he. "Those upper windows command a view as far as Oakville. Let me strap your shawl for you. Nita, where is your bag?"

There was the inevitable hurry and confusion of landing. Then Hester found herself driving rapidly away from the river, then down an avenue running parallel with the river, then stopping in front of the house.

If they had been alone I am convinced that Colonel Maynard's reticent lips would have framed, in spite of themselves, some word of welcome. But before Nita his lips were sealed. He could not even trust himself to a caress. He made a few commonplace remarks descriptive of the place; then, when the carriage drew up, he lifted out Hester and Nita.

To be sure he did hold Hester's hand a trifle longer than necessity required in a firm grasp, but that might have been an accident. He looked away from her with a curious air of abstraction and preoccupation. It seemed to Hester that she was the last thought in his mind.

So their married life began, and so it went on. Gradually it grew to be an immense relief to Hester that Nita was with her; otherwise it seemed to her she must have perished of loneliness. Colonel Maynard was so little with her, he made so little effort to share the pleasures and occupations of her life. If Hester could have seen herself as others saw her, she would not have wondered at this. She was so changed herself.

The absurd suspicion which had taken possession of her clouded her whole manner. She was convinced that he was bored by her society, that he would be a happier man if he were still keeping bachelors' hall at Chestnut Hill. She forgot how equally convinced she had been, only six months before, how desperately he was in love with her. Jealousy is very inconsequent; and, strange to say, this girl who had not married for love was frightfully jealous now.

Dan Hyde had come down for a week's vacation, and he and his sweetheart were roaming the country far and near. Hester saw them start off morning after morning, on long walks and drives, with an aching heart. Was this her punishment for having been willing to make a mere marriage of convenience in the first place.

One day she resolved upon a bold stroke. Nita had sauntered down the avenue leaning on Dan's arm. Hester knew that Colonel Maynard was in the library at that moment sorting over papers. She would go to him, ask him to put them by and take a walk with her. She stole in behind him and laid her hand timidly on his shoulder.

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"Henry," she said, addressing him as he had requested her to do, but as she somehow found great difficulty in doing.

He looked up at her in unfeigned surprise. If his heart beat tumultuously how was she to guess it? She, for her part, was seized with a fit shyness. She could not find words to frame her request, and he spoke first.

"You must make my apologies to Dan, Hester. I am obliged to go into town, and shall not be at home for dinner. And I may be detained all night. You won't be uneasy if I am?"

Business, business! Always business! How she hated it. How jealous she was of it. She took her hand off his shoulder.

"Certainly not," she said, quietly.

And he thought:

"Little she cares whether I come or stay."

Riding into town he thought:

"I have made a mistake. Poor girl, she is wretched in her chains. Why could I not leave her to live her free girl life, and play the part of adopted father to her and Nita? As it is, I have made myself ridiculous and her miserable."

On arriving in the country town which was his destination, he found himself compelled to stay all night, as he had half anticipated. He had given Hester an intimation of this. It would not be worth while to write and tell her that he would not probably be home till late the next day.

Perhaps he would not even be missed. The three young people would have a merry time together, all the merrier for his absence. The next day he found himself compelled to take a journey by rail, still on the same business that took him into town. He might be gone a day or two.

He wrote a hurried note to Hester to this effect, sending it by the messenger with whom he sent back his horse to Chestnut Hill. The note was handed to Hester as she came springing out to meet her husband, thinking he had returned.

She was exceedingly disappointed. Dan and Nita were engrossed with each other. She was absolutely longing for a long talk with the sympathetic, interested Cousin Henry of yore. Gone! Gone for two or three days. Oh, why had he not taken her, too? Oh, how she would have liked to go.

How unkind it was. Why had he married her in pretence? This was no true marriage, when she was not permitted to share his life. Poor girl, what bitter tears she shed. A day passed. On the morning of the second day came a telegram saying that Colonel Maynard would be home again the evening of the following day. Hester was first bitterly disappointed at the delay, then pleased that he had thought it worth his while not to keep her in suspense. Upon the whole, she was not unhappy while she waited.

She was a good deal by herself. She thought a great deal about the brief past during which she had known her husband. She recalled their courtship, his devotion, the brightness he had put into her life from the first. She remembered how, when her mother had died, her Cousin Henry had been the only friend and comforter she had had. She wondered what would she have done without him?

The afternoon before she expected him, she decorated the house with flowers for a feast. She trailed crimson vines over the doorways. She placed flaming branches of sumach over the pictures; and in the tall Indian vases in the hall.

The house looked gorgeous. Suddenly a strange, gloomy presentiment overcame her. She put on her hat and walked in the garden, down the avenue, restlessly. It grew to be the time for the train to arrive in the village. How strange that it did not come.

She walked on. Still no whistle. She hurried on; she could hardly have told you why. It was late twilight by this time. She came to the end of the avenue, and out upon the road presently.

Just here the railroad ran along beside the turnpike for a few yards. She stared up and down. A little distance down the road she saw lights, heard voices—and—yes, surely, the locomotive, wheezing exhaustedly. She hurried down the road with no definite object, only impelled by that same presentiment of coming evil.

She gathered what had occurred as soon as she reached the little crowd on and about the train which lumbered up the track. One or two of the carriages overturned. There had been an accident.

"One man is killed," she heard one railway official say to another. "Fell out on his head."

"Did you see who it was?"

"No. I'm going now. Tim said he heard it was Colonel Maynard. He was in that forward carriage."

Hester heard every word, but she gave no sound. She simply pressed her hands convulsively over her beating heart, and started forward to follow the speaker. A step or two farther on, two men met them carrying a dark mass between them. Hester pressed nearer. It was he.

She threw out her arms with a sharp, bitter cry. She wavered, fell. Someone rushed toward her and caught her, just in time. Caught her and carried her a few paces back from the road, chafed her cold hands, called her Hester in low, tender tones.

Do you guess who it was? Of course you do. It was her husband, who had recognised her at the moment that she was about to swoon away, as he was assisting in the removal of his ill-fated fellow-traveller.

So, when Hester returned to consciousness, she was lying in his arms, pressed to his heart! It was some time before she realised it all, understood that she was not called upon to part with what she had discovered to be the one good thing of her life.

Meanwhile, Colonel Maynard had sent home for a carriage, into which he lifted her. Gradually Hester contrived to tell him the incoherent tale of how she had come there—how she had been impelled to look for him.

"I was haunted by such a frightful dread and terror. I was so afraid I would never see you again."

As she said so, she clasped her hands on his shoulder and clung to him, hiding her face. He held her closer, tighter.

"Hester," he said, "do you know that you almost make me think you care for me—a little?"

Whereupon she whispered:

"I love you."

And when he said, "Thank God!" it was borne in upon her how much he cared for her. Whereupon all doubt and misgiving rolled away between them, from that time forth. M. L.

CHINESE costume is to be adopted at the seaside and in the country, as far as hats for ladies are concerned. They are (the hats) to be immense; horse-frightening on the public roads has not been reckoned for in this innovation.

FLOGGING IN THE NAVY AND ARMY.—A Parliamentary paper gives the following returns of corporal punishment in Her Majesty's Navy, for the ten years ending December 31, 1878: Total number of men sentenced to be flogged, 247; number of lashes awarded, 9,324; lashes inflicted, 9,173. Total men in army during the same period punished by flogging, exclusive of those so punished in prison, 25; total number of lashes, 103.

STATISTICS.

ITALIAN PORTS.—During the year 1878 the number of ships that entered and left the Italian ports with cargoes was 189,154—sailing vessels, 23,519; steamers, 7,919—of 25,253,102

tons, and manned by 411,023 sailors. Of this number, 171,658 were Italian and 17,496, of foreign nationality. In addition to these there were 128,237 coasting vessels and 29,479 steamers. The deep-sea fisheries employed a fleet of 3,132 sailing vessels, of 29,783 tons, and manned by 20,292 men. Including ships that touched at the various ports en route, the total number for the year was 229,766 of all kinds, with crews amounting to 2,281,347, and carrying 853,093 passengers.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SCONES, SODA.—Dissolve half a salt-spoonful of carbonate of soda and five ounces of fresh butter or lard in a quarter of a pint of warm water or milk: put ten ounces of flour into a bowl, add a pinch of salt, and stir in the liquor to make a stiff dough. Roll this out into a round cake a quarter of an inch thick, mark this into eight portions, and bake on a griddle or in a thick frying-pan. Split the scones, butter them well, and serve very hot. Time, to bake, fifteen to twenty minutes. Probable cost, sixpence.

SCOTCH OATMEAL CAKES.—For eaten cakes, take some meal, mix with it a little salt and melted suet and sufficient water to work it into a thick dough, roll out into a cake as thin as possible, divide into quarters, and spread out on the "griddle" (a flat circular piece of iron about eighteen inches in diameter, suspended over the fire), and bake each side in turn. The cakes must then be toasted before the fire till they are curled and crisp. They must be crisp and brittle to be palatable.

SEED CAKE, RICH.—Take a pound and a quarter of flour, well dried, one pound of butter, one pound of pounded and sifted loaf sugar, eight eggs, and two ounces of caraway-seeds, one grated nutmeg, and its weight in cinnamon. Beat the butter to a cream, put in the sugar, beat the whites of the eggs and the yolks separately, then mix them with the butter and sugar. Beat in the flour, spice, and seed, a short time before placing it in the oven. Bake in a quick oven. Time, two hours to bake.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THIS is what a dentist, who seized a victim's molar, once said: "Piece-ably if I can, force-ply if I must."

Most of the shops under the Grand Hotel at Charing Cross are let at £500 a year for the first year and £600 after. It is thought they will pay the bulk of the ground rent.

The Queen has purchased the picture of the "Antwerp Fishmarket," painted by Mr. Legsdall, which is now exhibiting in the Royal Academy.

EXTRAVAGANCE in dress amongst the Parisians has reached a climax; a correspondent tells us she has seen a dress at a fashionable milliner's which is valued at £4,000.

Mr young medical friend says the finest artist he ever met was an itinerant pavement illustrator, who painted an orange peel so naturally that six fat men, an old woman, and a nursery-maid all slipped down on it in the course of twenty minutes.

One day recently Mr. Piper, of Albany, had the contents of his cellar carted down to the Lyne, and with his own hand he smashed all the bottles of port, sherry, and champagne in the bed of the stream, and drew the bung of a keg of whisky, which he emptied into the river. Sir Wilfred Lawson is at last making disciples.

The next "new thing" is likely to be glass type for newspaper printing! Experiments have just been made in Paris with glass type, and the result is said to have been very successful. The type preserves its cleanliness almost indefinitely; it is said to wear better than metal, and to maintain its sharpness of outline longer.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. C.—The landlord can claim the month's rent before you leave; also a month's notice or a month's money if taken by the month, but he cannot stop goods for the latter.

BARNEY.—We believe the name is a corruption from the French "Galest," meaning "pebble," "shingle."

H. T.—We are afraid we cannot help you. There is no remedy. The depth of the circles depends on the state of the health.

LILLIE B.—1. "Domine Diriges Nos" means God and my right. 2. Handwriting rather cramped; requires practice.

A WELL-WISHER.—Try the following: Saturate the skin with olive oil for one hour, then wipe it off and apply a mixture of one ounce powdered quicklime, one drachm powdered orpiment, and the white of an egg.

H. F.—Hoyle makes no mention of games at cribbage for six players.

READER.—If we understand your statement aright, you are liable for the debt.

W. H. P.—The substitution of iron for wood in the construction of steam vessels was first made in 1830 by William Fairbairn, of Manchester. Amongst others he constructed an iron vessel for the Lake of Zurich. He subsequently became associated with the Messrs. Laird, of Birkenhead, and with them up to 1848 had constructed more than one hundred first-class ships.

W. T. B.—The Isle of Wight has an area of about 160 square miles.

MARY.—To restore your grey hair to its original colour try Mrs. Batchelor's Hair Colour Restorer, a cooling lotion which we believe contains no dye, and therefore harmless to the skin.

A. M.—1. Generally on the third finger of the right hand. 2. Not proper or becoming. 3. The seven wonders of the world are: The Pyramids, the Mausoleum of Artemisia, Diana's Temple at Ephesus, Babylon's Hanging Garden, the Colossus at Rhodes, the Jupiter of Phidias, and the Pharos of Alexandria.

ARIEL.—It was not obligatory on the lady's part to answer your letter.

KARE.—One third of the property goes to the widow, and the residue in equal proportions to the children, without regard to their sex.

S. F.—We think the name you mention is of French extract.

FRED.—In a healthy state it contains urea, uric acid, sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid, magnesia, phosphate of soda, lime, &c. It is only when these are discovered in excess that they indicate disease.

H. S.—The "Great Eastern" was begun in 1854 and completed in 1859, by J. Scott Russell, at Millwall, on the Thames.

MARION.—Under the circumstances narrated by you, we think it would be better not to marry into such a family, particularly as there has been no formal engagement between you and the young man referred to.

ANNIE.—We know of nothing better for chapped hands than glycerine.

JOHN.—You are liable for the debt incurred by your daughter. She is not of age till she is twenty-one.

JOHN J.—As you pay the premium under the present husband's name he can claim the insurance money on his wife's death. Consult a lawyer, who will show you how to obtain a lien on the policy.

JEREMIAH.—When a wheel is running on the ground the ground is the true centre, and the top of the wheel travels exactly twice as fast as the actual forward motion of the centre or its level, the motion of any point on the rim being retarded or accelerated in proportion as it comes above or below its axis. When descending it retards, and when it touches the ground it is momentarily still, to go forward again with increasing speed when rising behind the axis, until it reaches the top. The curve described by any particular point on the rim of the wheel in one revolution is called a cycloid, which is equal to about four times the diameter, while the forward progress on the plane or level is equal to the circumference, which is but a trifle more than three times in diameter.

HOSE and BRANCH PIPE, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Hose is dark, medium height, good-looking. Branch Pipe is dark, blue eyes, good-looking.

MIGNONETTE and WHITE MOSS ROSE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Mignonette is twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes. White Moss Rose is eighteen, medium height, dark, brown eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between twenty-two and twenty-five, tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

W. H., twenty-four, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be about twenty, good-looking, cheerful, fond of music.

G. P. D., twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, fond of home and music, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, good-looking, loving.

W. G. B. and M. G. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. W. G. B. is twenty-three, loving, dark, medium height, fond of home and music, brown hair and eyes. M. G. H. is twenty-one, dark, fond of music and dancing, loving, brown hair and eyes.

PAMELA, ANNIE, MAUD, and NELLIE, four friends, wish to correspond with four tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Pamela is nineteen, tall, dark, fond of home and children. Annie is twenty-four, fond of home and music. Maud is eighteen, good-looking, fond of home and music. Nellie is fond of home and children, of medium height.

THE COTTAGE GATE.

In the sultry time of mowing,
When the fields are full of hay,
Pretty Janet brings her sewing
To the gate at close of day.

Do you wonder that she lingers,
Often glances down the lane?
Do you ask me why her fingers
Seem to find their work a strain?

Love's dreams hold them in their tether;
Love is often (as we know)
Idle in the summer weather,
Idlest in the summer glow.

Now the toil of day is over;
Janet has not long to wait
For a shadow on the clover
And a footstep at the gate.

How is this? The slightest sheeting
Has been taken up anew;
Very quiet is her greeting,
Scarcely raised those eyes of blue.

Now he leans upon the railing,
Tells her all about the hay,
Still his pains are unavailing,
Very little will she say.

If you think it strange, my reader,
Learn a lesson from the rose,
From the garden's queenly leader,
Fairest flower that ever blows.

Not at once she flaunts her petals;
First a bud of sober green,
By-and-bye the stretching sepals
Show a dash of red between.

Breezes rock her, sunbeams woo her,
Wider and wider does she start;
Opens out her crimson treasures,
Yields the fragrance at her heart.

Ah! the rosebuds will not render
All their secrets in a day,
And the maiden, shy and tender,
Is as diffident as they.

W.

W. S., twenty-four, tall, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

S. P. and J. D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. S. P. is nineteen, grey eyes, fair. J. D. is twenty, good-looking, dark. Respondents must be fair, of a loving disposition, good-looking, fond of home and music.

CATHERINE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Catherine is twenty-two, of a loving disposition, fond of home, tall, fair, domesticated. Nellie is nineteen, loving, fond of home and children, tall.

NORA and DORA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Nora is twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, and handsome. Dora is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty-two and twenty-five, medium height, fair, fond of music.

GABRIEL, twenty-one, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be fond of music, good-looking, of a loving disposition, and tall.

HAVE GOT, RAW NECK, and FLAT FOOT, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Have Got is twenty, tall, dark, fond of children. Raw Neck is twenty-four, blue eyes, fair, fond of music and dancing. Flat Foot is twenty-one, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

CLARA and AMELIA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Clara is twenty-one, good-looking, tall, fond of music and dancing. Amelia is twenty, fond of home and children, domesticated, tall.

FLYING BOOM and ROYAL TRUCK, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies about the same age. Flying Boom is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing, of a loving disposition. Royal Truck is twenty-one, auburn hair, blue eyes, medium height, loving, fond of dancing.

NELLY B., seventeen, tall, fair, fond of music, would like to correspond with a tall, good-looking young man.

RACHAEL and NELLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Rachael is nineteen, fair, fond of home and music. Nelly is nineteen, fair, tall, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about twenty, dark.

W. B. and K. K., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. K. K. is twenty-five, fair, of a loving disposition, medium height, fond of music, good-looking. W. B. is twenty-three, medium height, fair.

EDWARD, twenty-one, dark, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be about nineteen, good-looking, and loving.

LILY and AMANDA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-five, brown hair, dark eyes. Amanda is fond of music, fair, good-looking, hazel eyes. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-one, fond of home, loving.

J. S. and W. T., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. J. S. is twenty-three, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. W. T. is twenty-three, dark hair, hazel eyes, and loving. Respondents must be fond of home and children, good-tempered.

CLAIRE and VIV, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Claire is twenty-four, tall. Viv is twenty-one, good-looking.

HARD CASE, DEAD NIP, and STRANDED, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Hard Case is twenty, medium height, blue eyes, fond of children, of a loving disposition. Dead Nip is twenty-one, blue eyes, fond of home. Stranded is nineteen, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JESSIE is responded to by—Lionel, tall, of a loving disposition, dark hair, grey eyes.

AMY by—Engine Fitter, twenty-five, dark.

G. W. B. by—Alice, eighteen, tall.

WILLIE by—Maggie, twenty-two, fair, medium height, light hair.

GRECIAN SPICE by—Jennie, twenty-one, of a loving disposition, fair, tall, blue eyes.

ROSE LASHING by—Em, twenty, tall, dark, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

COFFEE PUT by—Emmie E., nineteen, dark hair and eyes, of a very loving disposition, and fond of home and music.

NEPTUNE by—Bessie T., twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

EUSTACE by—Violet, seventeen, fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition; and by—Maud T., seventeen, loving, fond of home and music, medium height, domesticated, blue eyes.

PENNY by—Jessamine, eighteen, tall, dark.

ST. CLAIR by—Eveline S., eighteen, tall, dark, loving, fond of music and dancing.

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